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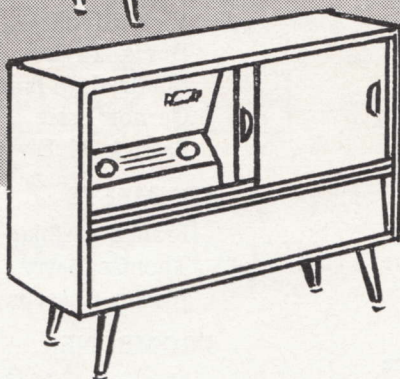
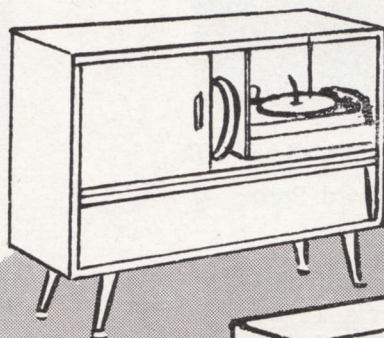
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*An Appreciation of*  
**Margaret Burke Sheridan**

*By MIMI ZUCCARI*



Margaret Sheridan (Peggy, to her friends) passed away, after much suffering borne with Christian faith, in Dublin on 16th April, 1958, aged only 67 years.

The great grief of all who knew her is one of the most significant memories she left behind. Her personality showed clearly the rectitude of her character, for Peggy Sheridan was loyal and generous in everything she did, and possessed a rare sincerity.

Her musical criticism was highly esteemed: severe, but artistically just and dispassionate, her advice was precious to many artists (during seasons in Dublin, London and more recently in New York),

to singers of yesterday and to rising young stars of to-day.

Though she was well aware of her past successes, still La Sheridan was spontaneous and simple. Her splendid operatic voice was of the highest quality and of a warm, pure timbre, possessed perfect equality in all registers and a forced note was never heard—her voice often seemed like a stringed instrument for its vibration and beautiful legato. Her phrasing was perfect, as was her musical sensitivity. She always sang with famous artistes: Gigli, Martinelli, Pertile, Lauri-Volpi and other top-ranking tenors.



Peggy, with her beautiful hands, accompanied herself splendidly at the piano and often liked to let us hear the nostalgic Irish songs which she loved for their simplicity.

His Master's Voice of London should publicise Margaret Sheridan's long-playing records and also her "Irish Songs" and "Butterfly," the complete opera which she made (on 78 r.p.m.) with the singers and chorus of La Scala, conducted by the unforgettable Vittore Veneziani, great but modest maestro who also died this year. I think that this edition of "Butterfly" (since it is the commemorative year of Puccini) should return to a prominent position in the record libraries of music lovers.

Margaret Sheridan came to Italy introduced by Marconi and by Maestro Mugnone and made her début at the Costanzi Theatre (now the Opera Theatre) in Rome on 3rd February, 1918. She had an immediate success in the part of Mimì in "Bohème," and Rosina Storchio, who was singing "Butterfly" at the Costanzi at that time, advised her to study this opera. In the meantime Peggy sang, with ever-increasing success, "Mimì" in London at Covent Garden with Mugnone. She was then signed up by the Teatro S. Carlo of Naples by Comm. Laganà and there won her great triumph in "Butterfly."

After Naples she was naturally summoned to Milan, to sing in "Bohème," "Iris" and "Mephistofele" for the season at Dal Verme. Immediately Mo. Arturo Toscanini had her engaged by La Scala, and under him she sang several operas, among which was included Puccini's "Manon Lescaut." I also remember her wonderful "Wally" at La Scala, conducted by Mo. Panizza, but studied under Toscanini. La Sheridan then sang in Riccitelli's "I Compagnacci" and Respighi's "Belfagor."

These seasons were interrupted by engagements at the Teatro Grande of Brescia, Covent Garden, and Monte Carlo: everywhere she obtained great success, due also to her charm and unusual personality. However, she retired from the stage . . . through pure self-criticism. All musicians and music lovers should remember this true artist, who loved Italian art so much. If her illness had not hindered her, she would have joyfully returned to the Italy which she adored for its memories, so dear to her heart. This was her last great wish.

Those of us who knew well the uprightness of her character remember her with affection and gratitude, in the sorrow of having lost a friend — a good and generous soul.

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Tangles of vegetation are brightened now by (5) *Tufted Vetch*; (6) *Toadflax* or *Butter-and-Eggs*, a ruthless spreader if allowed in gardens; (7) *Larger Bindweed* one of several white flowers named *Lady's Smock*; and by (8) *Yarrow* which the Grete Herball of 1526 called *Carpenter's Grass*, since 'it is good to rejoyne and soudre wounds'. August is the month for the wide-eyed (9) *Grass of Parnassus*, especially among northern mountains, and for (10) *Himalayan Balsam* or *Policeman's Helmet*, introduced to greenhouses from India in 1839, and now a magnificent escape along rivers and canals.

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# A Compendium of the

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By E. HERBERT-CAESARI

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## EVOLVEMENT OF OPERA

Through racial idiosyncrasy and divergence of outlook, the Northern people are inclined to be critical of both Latins and Celts. They level their sarcasms particularly at the Italian who, they aver, cannot even talk without a variety of facial expressions, flourishing gestures with hands and arms and sometimes the entire body, being on the whole much too *theatrical* in all his ways. In a sense, the average Italian cannot help being "theatrical," for theatre is in his blood. How little is it realised that all the theatres originated in the Italian theatre and that for fifteen hundred years it was the only theatre in Europe! It has been said that "its history is an important part of the history of the world."

★ ★ ★

The Italian theatre was the child of the pagan Roman Theatre and the Christian Roman Church, the pagan Roman Theatre itself being the child of the Greek Theatre and of an Italian civilization earlier than that of Rome.

★ ★ ★

Latin drama flourished in different scenic forms with an intermingling of dialogue, music, song and dance (the embryo of opera?). Licentious speech was not foreign to certain forms of dramatic composition. However, famous playwrights emerged to greatly influence the Italian theatre in spite of the tyrannical obstacles in Roman government and life. Plautus was the greatest writer of true comedy and his influence on the Italian theatre was far-reaching. Later came the emergence of the pantomimic art of expressing thoughts, ideas and plots by gesture alone. The pantomime became a separate art, and its performers were men who "expressed anything with knowing hands." For many generations the shows were often riddled with loose talk and looser gestures, but political ridicule was taboo, for obvious reasons. When, however, the Christian Church had become the State religion, the mime continued unabated to ridicule the ministers of the new religion, while the Church fulminated against the ever-increasing immorality of the pantomimic adventures and gradually won the day by popularising the religious drama (the embryo forerunner of the oratorio?). So the first seeds were sown in good earth. As with the passing of the years the more immoral plays gradually lost favour, so the

liturgical drama went from strength to strength to assume, after the eleventh and twelfth centuries a marked dramatic character. The Italian theatre owes much to the Christian Church (as indeed did the Schola Cantorum, the old Italian School of Singing) which ultimately triumphed over the former rather lewd pagan performances.

★ ★ ★

And so, as we move towards the Middle Ages we touch the development in Italy of the *Sacra Rappresentazione*. Here again, we note the great influence exercised by the Church, as also in the liturgical drama, the *laudi* and *devozione*. Performed at first in the churches proper, with the clergy as actors, they subsequently came into the open *piazza* and were performed by laymen. Towards the end of the sixteenth century we meet the performances which, definitely, were the forerunners of what to-day is known as Opera.

★ ★ ★

In Florence, towards the close of the sixteenth century, a small group of literati and musicians, among which were Caccini, Peri, del Cavaliere, centred around Count Giovanni Bardi and Jacopo Corsi, the patrician, and formed an artistic society known as the *Camerata*—meaning a fellowship or comradeship of art and artists. Their leading theoretician was Vincenzo Galilei, father of the famous Galileo. The *Camerata* fostered above all monodic music, as opposed to the contrapuntal choral style which they considered was "the very enemy of the word" and what it stood for. They maintained that the melodic line, sung solo, alone could give life to the word. Their aim therefore centred chiefly on melodies and arias for solo singing with some orchestral accompaniment as a supporting and embroidering background. The *Camerata* broke new ground.

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In 1589, when Vincenzo, Duke of Mantua "of the handsome features and impressive stature," and said to have had "a passion for singers" (with a great penchant for the female species) and was withal a great lover of music, visited Florence, he was flabbergasted to find the city like a fairyland, adorned as it was with vivid scenery, and scaffolding erected every-



where for pageants, tournaments and mock-battles. The spectacles lasted several weeks. It was during this period of activity that the Camerata staged Rinuccini's *Il Combattimento d'Appolline col serpente*, the forerunner of the music-drama which was later conceived and produced by these enthusiasts.



Although female singers were not numerically so prominent in those days, we hear of "the glorious Vittoria Archilei" and Margherita Caccini "who also participated in the dancing." The Duke was highly impressed by the spectacle and the performers. Amongst other works the Camerata produced Cavaliere's *The Representation of Soul and Body* (published in 1600), which is considered the first oratorio; he introduced vocal ornaments and embroidery for the soloists—the beginnings of coloratura virtuosity. Jacopo Peri's *Euridice* and Caccini's effort on the same subject were performed in 1600. By later standards these were not great works, but they impressed contemporary imagination as infinitely more suggestive of life and passion than the other attempts in vogue. Meantime, Claudio Monteverde was blazing his own trail in Mantua where at the court of the Duke he was appointed in 1590, when twenty-three years old. His engagement at the court lasted twenty-one years and although recognised as an outstanding madrigalist composer and eventually acknowledged as the greatest musician in Italy in his time, he finally broke away from the rigid northern structure of madrigal composition to produce a more flexible and humanistic work. In fact, history states that Monteverde with his *Orfeo* was the forerunner of Opera, for he revealed more advanced and greater musical and dramatic qualities than the Florentine versions of music drama. *Orfeo* was produced in 1607 in the palace of the Duke of Mantua. His next opera, *Arianna*, was produced in the Mantuan court in 1608. It is related that the spectators, several thousand, were "amazed at the luxury and brilliance of the production." Then came his *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* in 1624.



Emulating the examples set by Florence and Mantua, music drama and opera rapidly spread to the courts of Padua, Milan, Bologna, Venice, Rome and others. Venice, which had become a great musical centre, set the example of building the very first Opera House in 1637. Whereupon every important Italian town built its own theatre for performing Opera. By 1641, in Venice alone, there were four opera houses, and at the close of the century no fewer than sixteen. (What a sad commentary to think that the great cities of the world to-day with their teeming millions can hardly keep one opera house going!)

It is an observed fact that in every attempt at innovation, man's first efforts are feeble because the original conception never is, and never can be global, never complete. In this he unwittingly obeys the very laws of his own nature: Does he not evolve from a pinpoint embryo that contains within its minute confines the complete man? Look how long he takes to develop and mature; witness how the majestic oak extrudes from the unspectacular acorn. Witness also the immature conceptions of the first locomotive, motor car, aeroplane, radio and television sets, and so forth, tantamount to and reflecting man's first feeble and awkward attempts to talk, walk, read and write, etc. Everything he first undertakes is of necessity incomplete in conception and therefore in application by the very law of life and things. And so it was with opera. However, the first efforts of these pioneers of opera laid the foundation stone for later achievement.



By the early days of Alessandro Scarlatti in Naples, before the end of the 17th century, the art of tune-making had blossomed into the effective form of the Aria. The germ of the Aria may be traced to advanced examples of folk-song and popular tunes generally. In opera it often became a soliloquy—the hero or villain "thinking out loud." With the awakened sense of melody came the need for the further development of the new art of instrumental accompaniment of single voices singing solo. Thus, operatic figures as we know them to-day began to emerge albeit in dim forms; they had to evolve together with the growing conception of opera. The development was unhurried and never spectacular. As new and more composers appeared on the scene they were persuaded and driven to the realisation of that sense of harmonically-solid melody which was present already in folk music, *canzoni*, *canzonette*, *villanelle* emanating particularly from southern Italy and centrally in Naples. Consequently, during the 17th and 18th centuries opera went from strength to strength. The recitativo *secco* and *cantato* was retained as an essential for budding operatic forms, and formal melody with the strong harmonic system of Neapolitan tonality came right into vogue. *Melody*, after all, backed by appropriate harmonies, *is the only true vocal-musical medium by which man can express life and his emotions*. Audiences want melody and more melody; but the so-called ultra-modern composers seem to have forgotten this forceful asset, or perhaps, what is closer to the truth, they are quite

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The gallantries of Francis I (1515-47) King of France, "handsome, chivalrous and brave" as suggested in Victor Hugo's *le Roi s'amuse*, were, for political reasons, switched to the broad shoulders of the equally gallant and handsome Vincenzo, Duke of Mantua—hence "Rigoletto" at the Mantuan Court.



incapable of writing one worthy of the term. To-day, creative ability in this sense appears to be dying, as it will when man turns from beauty of form and colour.

★ ★ ★

We must mention Purcell (1659), although not strictly an operatic composer. However, his opera *Dido and Aeneas* (1689) is considered a masterpiece in view of the age in which it was written. There is no spoken dialogue, but only recitative. Purcell, however, made no real impact on the march of Opera such as we are now contemplating.

★ ★ ★

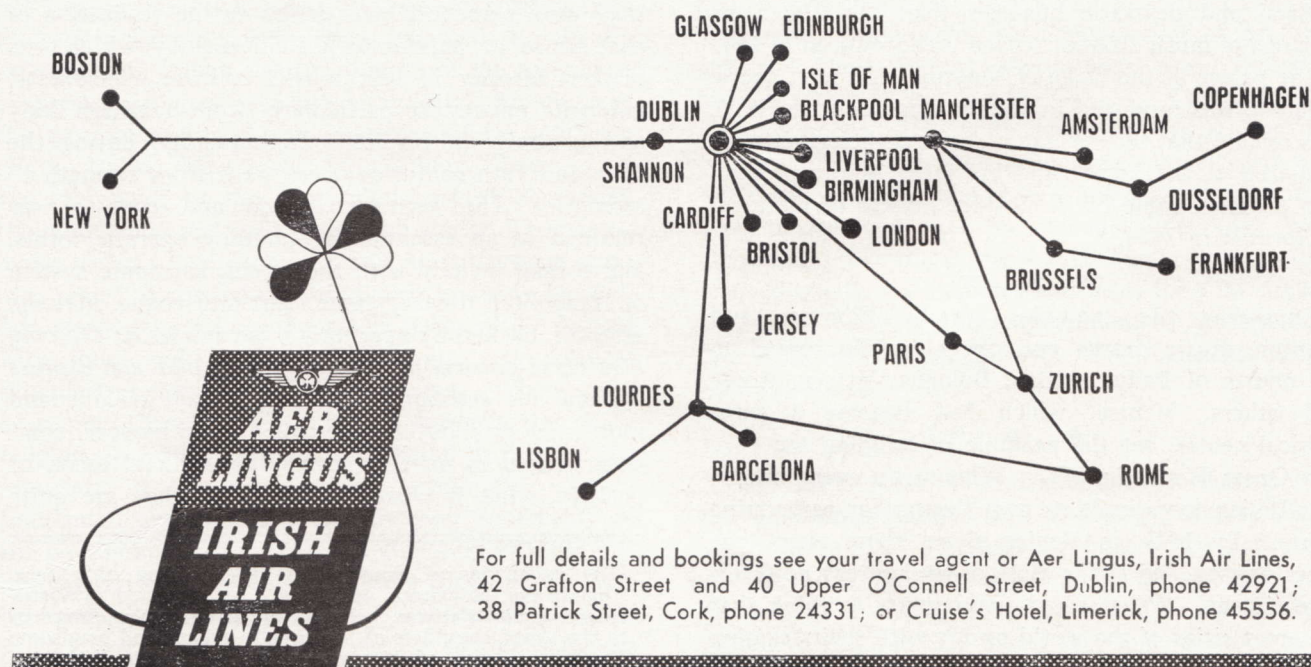
Lulli (or Lully) was born in Florence in 1639. Subsequently, he went to Paris and became a naturalised Frenchman. His more important operas were *Alceste* (1674) and *Armide* (1686). He was the first to quicken the action of the story and improve the composition of the orchestra into which he introduced new instruments. Lully was the founder of French opera. He was the Director of the Paris Opera for fifteen years. Incidentally, Lully is said to be the composer of the tune that became the English National Anthem; some say part of it was the work of John Bull.

Gluck (1714) emerged as an operatic composer. He went to Milan in 1736 to continue his studies in composition. He produced nine operas at various Italian theatres between 1741 and 1745. Well received but unimportant. (Handel made the caustic remark that Gluck "knows no more counterpoint than my cook.") He was never a great master of counterpoint. After other rather barren attempts he finally produced *Orfeo and Euridice* in 1762 with considerable success. We next see him in Paris where he produced *Iphigenie en Aulide* in 1774. Although much feted he was considered "no Rameau." An added rival was the Italian operatic composer Piccinni, invited to Paris by Madame du Barry. Partisan rivalry existed between them, and notorious was the "war" between admiring Gluckists and devoted Piccinnists. Gluck won, it seems. He finally retired to Vienna. He left his mark on operatic form and procedure.

★ ★ ★

The number of operatic composers who emerged in Italy, France and Germany during the 18th century are too numerous to mention individually in this article, but one and all contributed progressive forms and new ideas, certain conventions being dropped to mark transitional stages in the history of opera.

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Mozart (1756) was the most precocious of all operatic composers. His history is too well known to relate here. One often wonders what he might have attained in serious opera had he lived another thirty years or so. We must mention Cherubini (born in Florence 1760) who is not beloved like Mozart—now become “the golden cow of the intellectuals”—although his influence and impact on the development of opera as an art form was very considerable; in all he wrote 32 operas. In Vienna he found the most whole-hearted admirer of his works in no less a person than the great Beethoven who considered him “the greatest composer of the age.” And that evidently included Mozart. Possibly Beethoven preferred the flowing Italian melody of Cherubini to the grasshopper leaps and intervals present in so many of Mozart’s soprano melodies, which often are so unvocal, yet, it seems, eminently suited to the Teutonic school of female hooting. Mozart was so very much happier when scoring for his basses and baritones. Furthermore, Cherubini was the greater contrapuntist of the two.



Weber (1786) was another operatic highlight to emerge. He wrote his first opera when not yet 14 years old. Many more came from his fertile brain, but were not too successful. However, he wrote

three masterpieces—*Der Freischütz*, *Euryanthe*, and *Oberon*. This last was written for Covent Garden, and was a triumphant success. Next we have Rossini (1792). His mother was a *prima donna buffa*. He was devoted to Mozart whom he outshone for sheer melodic brilliance with his imperishable *Barber of Seville*, which is flawless with not a boring moment. He was 24 when it was first produced, but before that he had written several operas, the most successful of which was “*Elisabeth, Queen of England*.” In this work he severed the cords of tradition and wrote the ornaments of the arias instead of leaving them to the fancy of the singers; he also cut loose from the *recitativo secco* to replace it by a recitative accompanied by a quartet of strings. Between 1815 and 1823 Rossini produced twenty operas. Possibly one day his and Cherubini’s operas will be revived and “plugged” like Mozart is to-day. One never can be sure of human likes and dislikes, and manias. Rossini’s *Cenerentola* is ranked with the *Barbiere* as a masterpiece of comedy. His last opera *William Tell* was produced in 1829.



Now comes Donzetti (1798). He wrote 64 operas in all. His rapidity of writing was simply phenomenal. His masterpieces are *Lucia*, *La Favorita*, *Don Pasquale*, *Elisir d’Amore*. In these and in all his works, he

## *Il Maestro* HERBERT - CAESARI

*E. HERBERT CAESARI was born in London in 1884, his mother being English and his father Italian. He was educated in Brighton, France, and Germany, and went to Rome in 1907 to study singing under Giovan Riccardo Daviesi, the greatest Sistine Chapel singer of the nineteenth century, and music composition under Giacomo Setaccioli, Vice-Director of the Royal Conservatorium. He holds the Royal Academy Santa Cecilia diploma for singing. In 1925 he returned to London on being appointed professor of singing at Trinity College of Music.*

*A number of his songs and a book of Vowelization exercises have been published by Ricordi. In 1936 Dent published The Science and Sensations of Vocal Tone, a treatise on vocal technique, highly recommended by such famous singers as Tetrizzini, Gigli, Schipa, Dinh Gilly, Margaret Sheridan, and others. In 1951 a Second Impression of this work was published, and in 1959 Dent are publishing a Third Impression, which is dedicated “To the memory of Margaret Sheridan”. Next came The Voice of the Mind, published by Hale in 1951, considered to be the most complete and lucid exposition of vocal technique ever published. A striking feature is the Introductory Lesson by Beniamino Gigli. A third work, Tradition and Gigli, published by Hale in 1958, gives a detailed account of the genesis and evolution of the Old Italian School of singing, describing how and with what means this School came into being.*



demonstrated his rare skill in writing for the voice, and his power of humorous delineation is second to none, as in *Don Pasquale* (quite the equal of the *Barbiere*), in *Elisir d'Amore*, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, *Rita*, etc. He was the very first composer to really *dramatise the vocal line* to fit the words and reflect their meaning. Hitherto all composers before him just aimed at a more or less pretty or sparkling tune whether the text expressed sorrow, regret, love, hate, sarcasm, joy, and so forth. Witness the dramatic moments in *Lucia* and *Favorita*. Then we have Bellini (1801). He is best known for his *La Sonnambula* (1831), *Norma* (1831), *I Puritani* (1835). *Norma* was much admired by Wagner, never partial to contemporary Italian compositions. Bellini was happiest when writing for female voices. He loved women, and they him. The next Italian to appear in the 19th century was Verdi (1813), subsequently to emerge as the giant of Italian composers, who in many ways broke the fetters of conventional forms. And his early methods and efforts bordered on the brutal, or so it seemed. More than Donizetti ever dreamed of, Verdi got into the skin of the plot and dramatised the words with extraordinary forms and rhythms. Often he achieved a quasi-violence even in the vocal line but scored extraordinary and hitherto unheard of effects. He staggered opera audiences from the outset. His works generally were misunderstood, misquoted and hated because of the impact of their novelty. He was a law unto himself, definitely an operatic innovator. Used to a shallow, unemotional line, sometimes beautiful, often just pretty and shallow like Dresden china of no real meaning, few were able to accept at first Verdi's breakaway into a real vocal-musical emotional field all along the line. When Rossini, who disliked intensely the new Verdi forms, heard *Rigoletto* he acclaimed it the work of a genius. In fact Verdi was a NEW genius and set the seal of Italian operatic forms obtaining in the 19th century. Puccini was another great dramatic composer who, like Verdi, could write at will delicately refined melodies. In France, Massenet emerged — the French

Verdi, Bizet, Saint-Saens, Debussy and others. In Germany the colossal Wagner, who loved the orchestra and was cruel to voices. Turning into the 20th century there was a musical breakaway — like the equally fateful breakaway in painting and sculpture, to degenerate into slap-dash daubs and hackings. Vocal line, melody and the beauty of vocal tone are deliberately side-tracked and prostituted with loud declamatory sequence. Not *bel canto*, but bellow. We are treated to stuff like *Wozzeck* which is as voice-wrecking and discordantly coarse as that in *Electra* and *Salome*. (N.B. It is significant that at the first rehearsal of the latter, Strauss is reported to have told the orchestra: "I want noise, more noise, and still more noise"! ) The human voice, its beauty, capabilities and limitations meant little to Strauss and such merchants. But, even as for the extravagant daubs and marble hackings labelled paintings and sculptures, they are acclaimed by certain elements of the public whose enthusiasm for all forms of debauched art is suspect, rarely genuine, ever ready to reveal "intellectual" powers of appreciation that so often are non-existent. Admittedly, such operas have much dramatic, histrionic and theatrical impact. The weird orchestral thunder may astonish—but there the story ends. This extreme breakaway from normal musical forms is a sign of mental aberration, almost psychopathic. It is not progress but retrogression. Traditional opera is emotional in its vocal content; this ultra-modern "impressionistic" (!) stuff is supposedly "intellectual." But how satisfying can intellectual singing be?

★ ★ ★

Such clever juggling with notes on a basis of discordant orchestral mumbo-jumbo was summed up once by Toscanini who, when rehearsing a certain ultra-modern "impressionistic" opera at La Scala stopped the orchestra, and jabbing his forefinger at the score, said: "I can't grasp what this fellow *means* and wants, and *I am sure he doesn't know himself*!"

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A good traditional opera is a poem of design and creation—even as is a fine painting and sculpture. Any attempt to “modernize” it by amputation of salient vocal expressiveness and by coarse orchestral cacophony reveals marked mental twists nurtured by self-deception, on the march with crooked progress.

★ ★ ★

The popular conception of melody is “tunefulness.” Musically, the expressing of human emotions can come only through song, and song above all is melody. The impact of a good aria, or better, of a whole opera based on a sequence of melodic forms—as, for instance, Verdi’s *Otello*, is such that it awakens within all audiences and within the individual in varying degree, an unsuspected force that breaks down temporarily psychological barriers, over-riding the little habits, fears, desires, indecisions and emotions of everyday life to rekindle, even though with only a momentary glow, a sense of higher, stronger, fuller life. Inversely, ignore melody and melodic forms, and score an opera with a preponderance of strident orchestral parlance, loud-mouthed and vulgar, with the poor human voice yapping and barking at great length with no real tonal nexus between one pitch and the next, and you just sever the head from the body musical. The unfortunate soprano in Strauss’s

*Ariadne auf Naxos* has, as Zerbinetta, to sing 38 non-stop pages that cover 246 bars, in which, among other strenuous vocal hieroglyphics set on a wickedly high tessitura, there are no less than 103 high A’s, 42 high B’s, 10 high C’s, 5 high C sharp, 1 high D flat, 2 high D natural, one of which is to be held for 16 beats (with a trill at the end!), plus 2 more high D natural held for 6 beats, and one high E natural. Poor vocal cords. In truth, Herr Strauss was a vocal assassin in every respect. Compared to him, Wagner was a vocal gentleman.

★ ★ ★

And now to end on a predictive note. Even as the present generations deride the artistic poverty of the caveman’s efforts, so future generations will despise the inartistic efforts distinguishing all so-called “ultra-modern” forms of art—music, painting, sculpture. Beauty is deathless. Operas abounding in sheer melody charged with emotion and expressive of life in its every facet, as we understand it, never can die. In opera, as in real life, man and woman cannot artistically and successfully go a-courting or a-quarrelling solely with the intellect. Ultra-modern opera attempts this, and fails. That is why it is doomed. But beauty of form, colour and expression will inevitably return to replace the present degeneration in all art.

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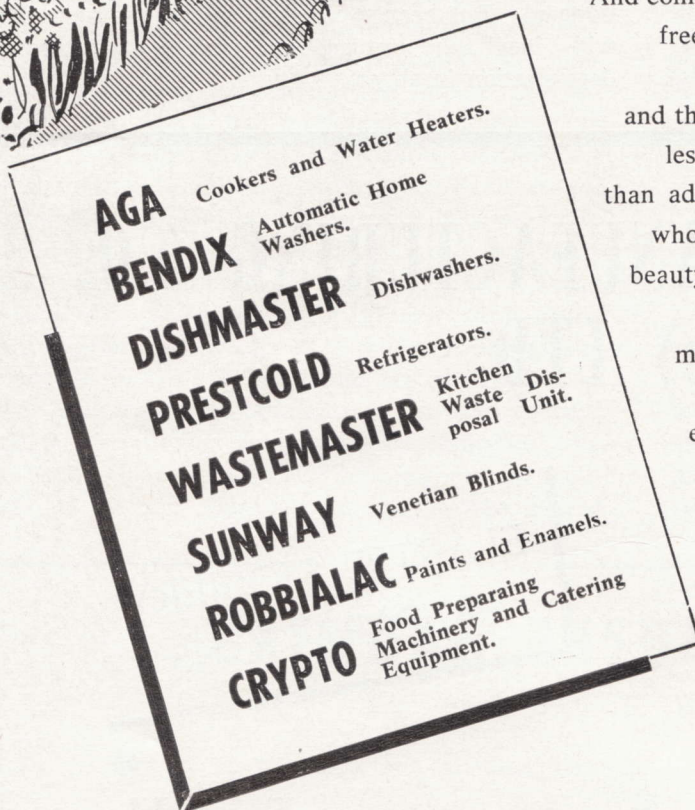




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# Festival Conductors

## SALVATORE ALLEGRA.

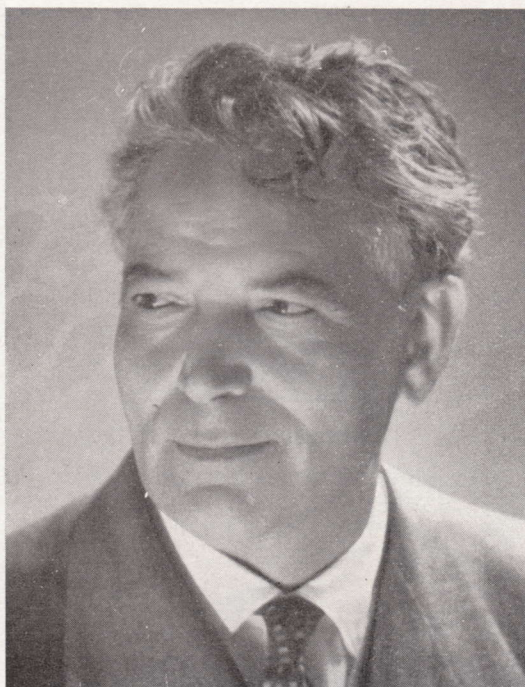
Still young, Maestro Salvatore Allegra already ranks among the leading contemporary composers. The discerning public is aware that for operas such as "*Ave Maria*," "*Medico Suo Malgrado*," "*Viandanti*" and "*Romulus*," as well as for numerous pieces of symphonic and chamber music, they are indebted to this son of Sicily and heir to a great musical tradition which includes his compatriot Bellini.

The opera "*Ave Maria*" was first given at the Morlacchi Theatre of Perugia and then in most of the leading theatres of Italy and the Continent, including the Scala, the Rome Opera and Caracalla, the Regio of Turin, the Pergola of Florence, the Massimo of Catania and at the opera houses of Kassel, Berlin, Amsterdam, Barcelona and Madrid.

His operas "*Medico Suo Malgrado*," "*Viandanti*" and "*Romulus*" also earned public and critical approval in Italy and elsewhere.

Salvatore Allegra in his original approach to the basic problem of modern operatic music posed himself the question whether it were still possible for the modern composer to say something worthily in music which had not already been said by Rossini, Bellini, Verdi and Wagner. He resolved this problem for himself in precisely the same way as Catalani, Puccini, Mascagni and Cilea before him had resolved it — that is, by re-affirming the principle (elementary but often overlooked) that art not only springs from the heart but speaks direct to the heart and the emotions.

That the nineteenth century composers had probed deep into all the human emotions was no sound reason, Allegra argued, why a modern should necessarily feel driven to arid experiments with new harmonic, even mathematical, methods of composition. He might instead choose to follow the paths of tradition. This, indeed, seemed the better way and also one which might be taken without risk or fear of appearing a mere imitator. Art had always accepted the same risk. Virgil had followed in the steps of Homer, yet centuries later came to be called the Master of Dante! Respect paid by the creative artist for the methods of his predecessors connotes no want of courage or originality in himself — indeed



it may call for a greater courage than the quest for novel techniques.

Faithful to this artistic creed, Allegra expresses what he feels even though the sentiment be as old as mankind. His music, free of technical complexities, is simple, sincere, melodious. Its form and inspiration derive from the characters of his operas and the dramatic situation. It appeals directly to the emotions. In all this the art of Allegra conforms with the finest traditions of Italian lyric music and bel canto.



## FRANCO PATANÈ

Franco Patanè, who is making a welcome return for the Italian Opera Festival of 1959, was born in Sicily 50 years ago. He studied at the San Pietro a Majella Conservatory of Naples, graduating in instrumentation, organ and pianoforte and later, in 1929, in composition. In the same year he was appointed an assistant conductor at the Teatro San Carlo and subsequently for the term of no less than fifteen years, between 1940 and 1955, he was permanent musical director of that great Theatre. His reputation is now world-wide, as he has directed opera in almost every other opera house of note in Italy as well as in other European countries—in Rome, Palermo, Genoa, Milan, Bologna and Turin; London (Covent Garden), Sofia, Paris, Nice, Madrid, Seville, etc., etc., in Cairo and Alexandria in North Africa, and in Johannesburg and Cape Town in South Africa.

Maestro Patanè's activities have not been limited to opera: he has achieved success as an orchestral conductor with such famous orchestras as the Santa Cecilia in Rome, the Radio Orchestras of Rome, Turin and Milan and the Scarlatti of Naples, the London Symphony, the Tonhalle of Zürich and orchestras in Spain, France and South Africa.

Though Maestro Patanè conducted opera for the D.G.O.S. in their Winter Season, 1958, and the Italian Festival of 1957, he had appeared once previously in Dublin. With members of the San Carlo (C.M.F.) Opera which visited Covent Garden with sensational success in that first year after the war, he participated in a celebrity concert sponsored by Hospitals Trust, Ltd., and broadcast from Radio Eireann studios in November, 1946.



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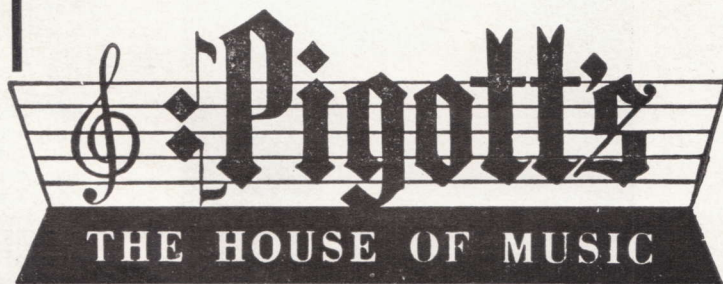
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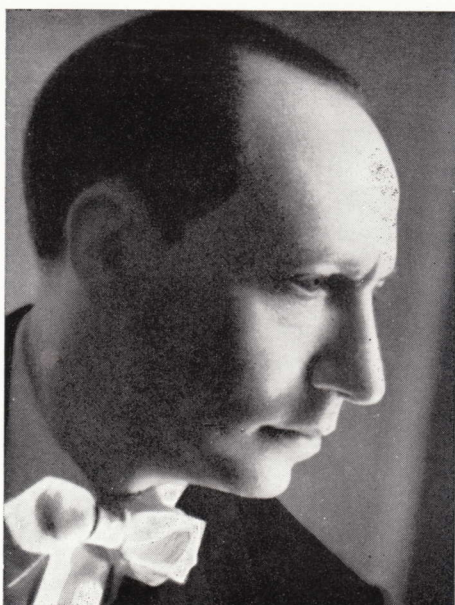
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## *Festival Conductors*

### **GIUSEPPE CARAVAGLIOS PATANE**

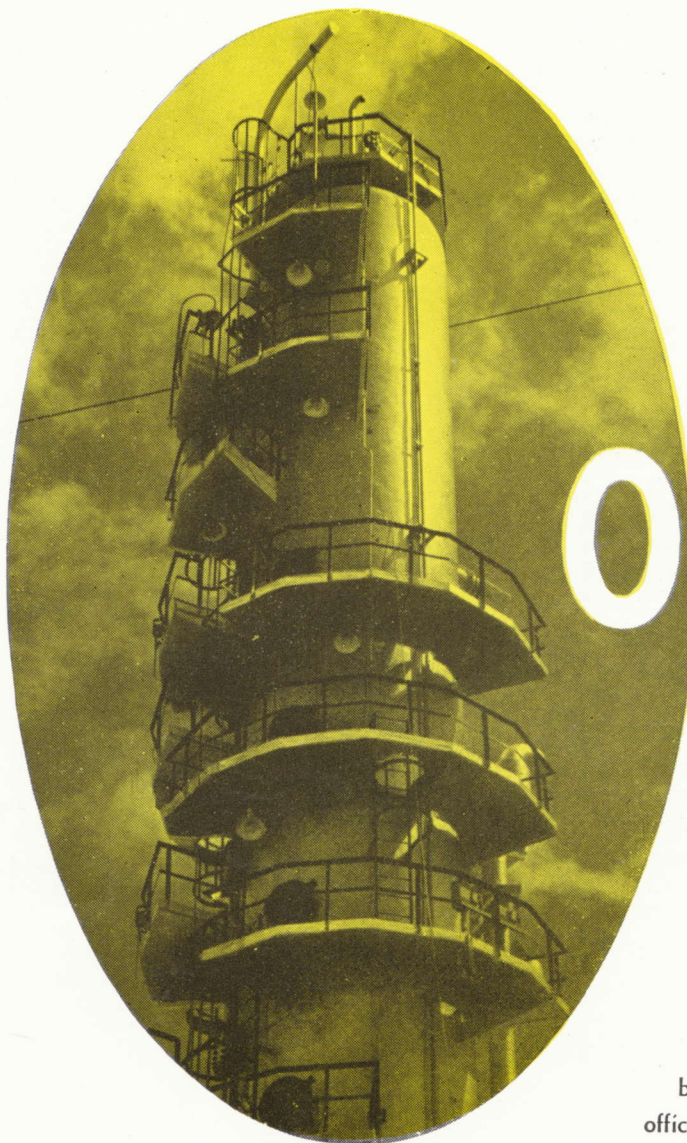
was born in Naples in 1932, and graduated in piano-forte, organ and composition at the San Pietro a Majella Conservatoire of his native city. It was in Naples, too, that his professional career began — at the unusually early age of 17 — as *Maestro Sostituto* at the great San Carlo Theatre. Since then, he has conducted in both opera and concert in many Italian theatres as well as abroad — including the San Carlo, the Petruzzelli Theatre of Bari, the Sociale of Mantua, the Royal Theatre of Cairo, the Capitol of Toulouse, the State Opera Houses of Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Cologne, the Opera House of Madrid, and several theatres in England. At 27 years of age Maestro Patanè's repertoire is astoundingly wide. It comprises no less than 84 operas, including Wagner's Tetralogy, all of which he is capable of directing from memory.



### **OTTAVIO ZIINO**

Born in Sicily and studied at Palermo Conservatoire and in Rome. Has conducted regularly during the last ten years at Rome Opera House, and also at other important theatres in Italy. He has toured as conductor in Europe, South America and Australia, his last and very successful undertaking of this nature being the 1957 Italian Opera Season in Oslo. He is interested in young singers and conducts at the Experimental Opera of Spoleto.





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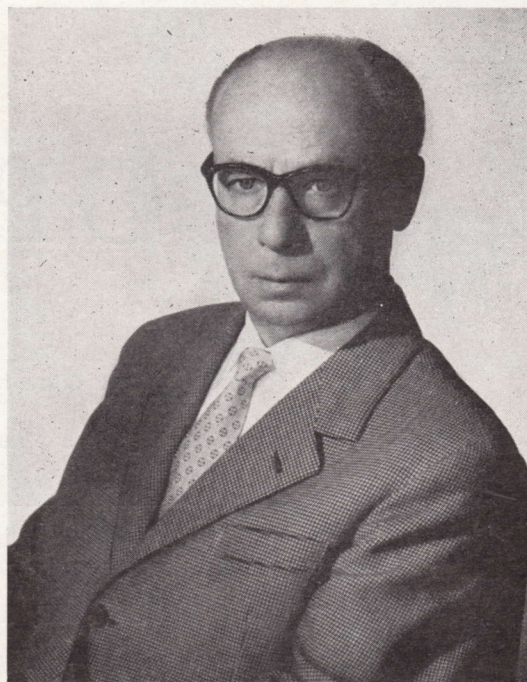
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## *Festival Impresario . . .*

### **CARDENIO BOTTI**

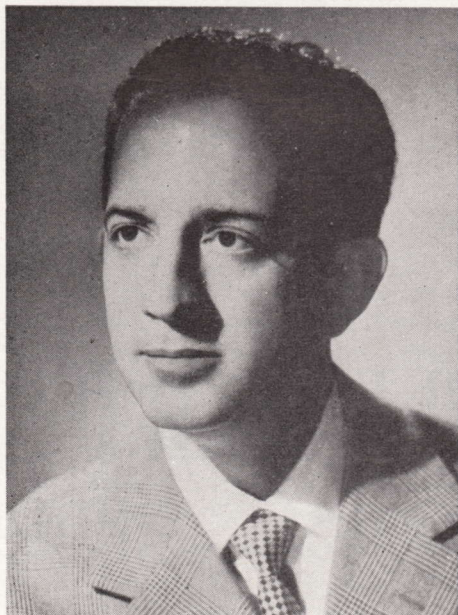
(manager). Maestro Botti's many activities, conductor, composer and man of theatre, are well known in Italy where he has supervised the direction of many of the principal opera houses. He completed his studies at the St. Cecilia Conservatoire in Rome. At the Royal Opera House in Malta he was first conductor for the operas and symphony concerts, and subsequently General Manager. He conducted the St. Cecilia Orchestra in Rome at various concerts in the well known Augusteo Hall. He was subsequently appointed Director of the Teatro Massimo in Palermo and later of the Carlo Felice in Genoa. He has been an adjudicator at numerous contests for singers and composers and has been Director of the Organisation for the co-ordination of the great Opera Houses, controlled by the State. For eight years he has organised the visiting Italian Opera Company for the D.G.O.S. and the benefit of his long experience has considerably aided the success of the Italian Opera Festivals in Dublin.



## *. . . and Producer*

### **BRUNO NOFRI**

Born in 1908 in Milan, Italy. After graduating from high school, he studied chiefly music at the Academy of Drama. From 1927 to 1930 he worked for La Scala, Milan, as an assistant to producer Caramba. From 1931 to 1938 he was with the Teatro Reale dell'Opera Rome as an assistant producer to A. Sanine, L. Wallerstein and H. Graff. In 1938 he started his career as producer of Opera and since then he has produced more than 160 operas at the major opera houses not only in Italy but also in Germany, Belgium, Ireland (Festival of Italian Opera in Dublin), Egypt, England, Lebanon, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, Japan, North and South American countries.





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### INES BARDINI

(Soprano). Completed her musical studies in Rome. She is the winner of three "bel canto" competitions, at Vercelli and Milan in 1952 and at Spoleto in 1953, where she made her debut in Ponchielli's *La Gioconda*. Then she sang at the S. Carlo in Naples, at the Opera in Rome and in other important opera houses, as well as at the opening of the Caracalla in Rome. She toured Belgium giving concerts and took part in the Italian season in Oslo when she sang in *Medea*. At Dublin this year she will sing in *Ave Maria*, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Andrea Chenier*.



### SILVANA BAZZONI

(Soprano). She attended the Conservatoire at Parma, the one frequented by Verdi, and finished her studies there. She won the competitions at Chiavari, Fabriano and Spoleto. In the latter city she made her debut at the Teatro Sperimentale when she interpreted the opera *Manon* with great success. Also in this opera she sang during a tournée in Germany, visiting the cities of Munich, Wiesbaden and Stuttgart. She has sung at the Teatro Lirico in Turin, at the Verdi in Florence and at the Opera in Rome.

### ORNELLA JACHETTI

(Soprano). Studied in Rome where she was born 24 years ago. After gaining her degree she sang at the Teatro Sperimentale in Spoleto, where she made her debut in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, being immediately appraised as outstanding. She has also won the international singing competition at Brussels. She has been asked to sing her operas (*Lucia*, *Rigoletto*, *The Barber*, *Elisir*) in several important theatres such as the Opera in Rome, the Petruzzelli in Bari, the Pergola in Florence, and in the "Travelling Theatre" in the 1958 tournée. Last year, at the Opera in Rome, she sang *Lucia di Lammermoor* when Virginia Zeani fell ill and obtained great praise. She has sung in various concerts on Radio Italiana.





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### OFELIA DI MARCO

(Soprano). Studied in Rome, her native city. Made her debut at the Teatro Sperimentale of Spoleto after winning the competition there. Has taken part in tournées in Belgium and Ireland and has sung in many Italian theatres including the Opera and Caracalla in Rome, in Milan, Perugia and Florence, and is everywhere appreciated for her style and purity of voice.

### MARIA TERESA MANDALARI

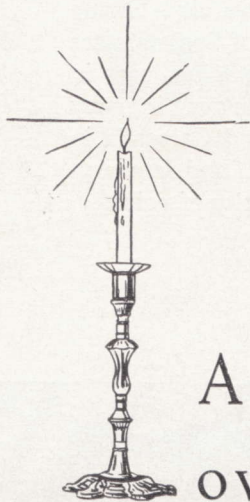
(Mezzo-soprano). Born in Sicily, she commenced her musical studies by taking a diploma first for piano and then for singing. After obtaining her Degree in Literature at the University of Catania, she dedicated herself to a musical career. She made her debut in *Rigoletto* in the S. Carlo in Naples, and since then has appeared in all the most important opera houses in Europe and also in concert halls in Rome, Milan, Palermo, Bologna, Parma, Cairo, London, Liverpool, Manchester, and many cities in Holland and Spain. She has recorded for "Quality Recording Co.," London, "Decca" and "Cetra."



### LICIA MARAGNO

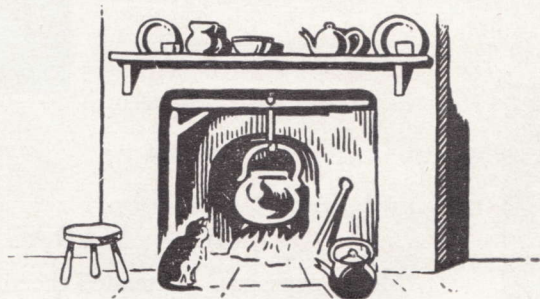
(Mezzo-soprano). Attended the singing classes at the S. Cecilia Conservatoire in Rome for three years, gaining her degree under the famous Gabriella Besanzoni. In 1957 she won the competition at the Teatro Sperimentale at Spoleto where she made her debut. She has since sung at the Teatro Bellini in Catania, at the Comunale in Bologna and in other top-ranking opera houses. She returns to Dublin for the second time.





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### ANNA MOFFO

was born in Philadelphia of Italian parents, and began her musical studies there. After many successes on the concert platform and in opera, she went in 1955 to Italy, to complete her operatic studies. She was soon engaged to sing in many of the important Italian opera houses, including La Scala, Milan. She has taken part in several Festivals in France, Austria and Germany and visited Chicago with the Vienna State Opera. She broadcasts frequently on Italian Television and is a recording artist for H.M.V.

### LUCIANA PALOMBI

(Soprano). Completed her musical studies in Rome, specialising in the secondary roles of the Italian repertoire. She has sung in many theatres with such famous artists as Maria Caniglia, Anita Cerquetti, Tagliavini, Protti, Borso and others.



### MARGHERITA RINALDI

(Soprano). Studied in Milan and perfected her style at the school of the famous artist Ines Adami Corradetti. Was discovered at the Spoleto competition where she won first prize. In the Teatro Sperimentale there, which is under the same direction as the Opera of Rome, she made her debut in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, obtaining great praise from public and press. She was immediately called to La Scala where she is now singing in the operas of her repertoire. She comes to Dublin to sing the part of Rosina in Rossini's *Barber of Seville*.





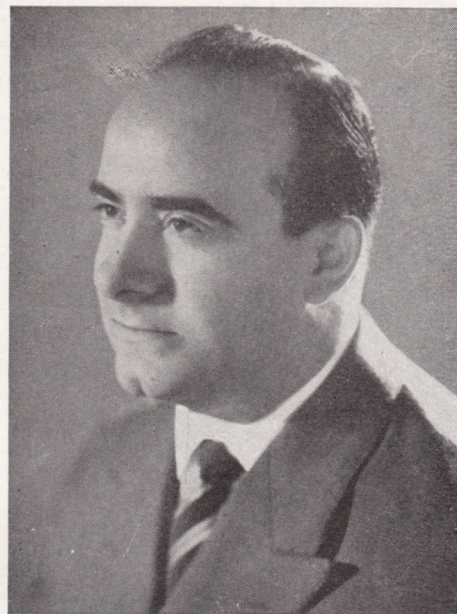
# Encore!





### UMBERTO BORSO

(Tenor). Made his debut five years ago at the Teatro Sperimentale of Spoleto in *La Forza del Destino* which his voice, dramatic, full and generous, was immediately judged most favourably by both the public and the national press. The most authoritative critics predicted a brilliant career for him. Indeed, he soon passed to L'Opera, Rome, then to La Fenice, Venice, to the Verdi, Trieste, the Massimo, Palermo, and to all the best-known Italian opera houses. He took part in an opera tournée in Australia and New Zealand, and in opera festivals in Egypt, Japan, Spain, and Holland. His most recent appearance was at Covent Garden where he sang *Aïda*.



### ATTILIO D'ORAZI

(Baritone). Winner of the national singing competition of the Radio TV Italiana, he made his debut as Figaro in the *Barber of Seville*, showing himself to be an artist of great quality. Later he sang in various opera houses in Italy and in Spain, confirming his artistry with excellent performances in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Rigoletto*, *Favorita*, *Faust*, and others. He returns to Dublin for the second time, as the *Barber* and as Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*.

### SERGIO FELICIANI

(Tenor). Studied in Rome and won the international competition at Fabriano. He has specialised in secondary roles, and has sung in many theatres in Rome, Naples, Genoa and other cities.







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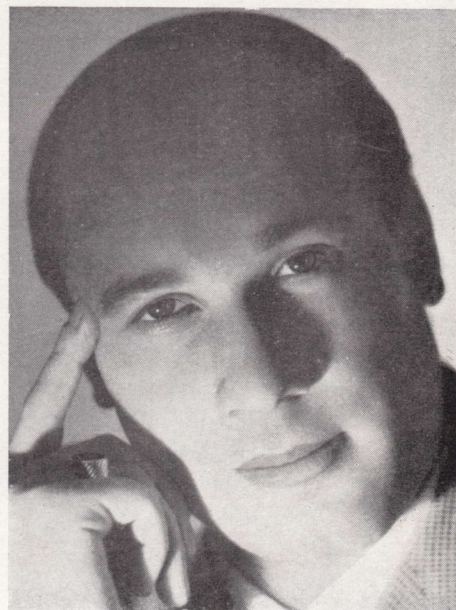


### ANTONIO GALIE

(Tenor) having completed his musical studies in Rome he was selected by the Teatro Sperimentale to make his debut in Spoleto, with Giordano's *Andrea Chenier*. Due to the personal success obtained in the title role, he was immediately engaged to sing the same opera at the Opera House, Rome, with the famous Renata Tebaldi. Subsequently he has performed in many of the important opera houses of Italy (Rome, Naples, Palermo, Bologna, Genoa) and abroad (Egypt, Germany, France, Ireland).

### LORIS GAMBELLI

(Bass). Was born in Rome and studied under the famous baritone Riccardo Stracciari. He won the International Singing Competition at Fabriano, and there made his debut in Donizetti's *La Favorita*. He has since sung in other Italian opera houses, including the Grande in Brescia and the Sociale in Mantova. Abroad he has taken part in the seasons in Madrid and in Dublin.



### SALVATORE GIOIA

(Tenor). Was born in Sicily where he completed his classical studies and then studied singing at the Conservatoire of S. Cecilia in Rome. He won the "Gran Prix" in the International Singing Contest at Toulouse and also at Spoleto, where he made his debut in 1956 in the opera *Matrimonio Segreto* by Cimarosa. Successively he appeared at the Teatro Nuovo in Milan singing *Elisir d'amore*; then in 1957 he was invited to La Scala to sing Rossini's *Count Ory*. Since then he has sung in the opera houses of Turin, Florence, Baden, Paris and others. He has taken part in operatic and symphonic concerts for the Italian radio, and has recorded for "Cetra" and "Orpheus."



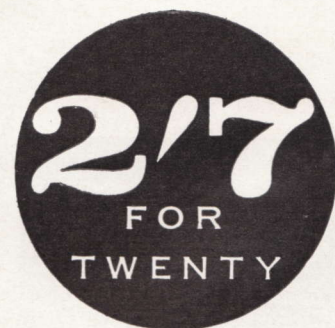


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### UMBERTO JACOBONI

(Bass). Was chosen at the school of La Scala, Milan, from among many competitors. When he finished his studies at the Musical Conservatoire in Rome, he won the competition at the Teatro di Spoleto for his debut there. He has sung in various Italian opera houses and visits Dublin for the first time.



### CARLO MELICIANI

(Baritone). Born in Arezzo in Tuscany, he studied in Milan, where he now lives. He made his debut in a concert on the Italian radio TV, and as a result was immediately engaged for another concert and for their opera season. With Beniamino Gigli he sang in the opera *Pagliacci* in Regio Emilia, after which he rapidly made his name in all the major opera houses of Italy, including La Fenice in Venice, the Massimo in Palermo, the Regio in Turin, the Verdi in Trieste, and the Regio in Parma. This year he has also been engaged to perform at La Scala, Milan. Abroad he has sung in Zurich, Lausanne, Toulouse, Barcelona, Lisbon, Madrid, London, Santiago, Rio de Janeiro, San Paolo, Dublin and Belfast.



### GIORGIO ONESTI

(Bass). Versatile and studious artist, particularly adapted to roles of "character," he shows an unusual ability. Has sung in many Italian and foreign theatres. He is very popular in Dublin, where he is returning for the fifth time.





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### AFRO POLI

(Baritone). A well-known artist in the Italian opera and cinema worlds. Indeed, he has sung in all the biggest theatres, including La Scala, and has taken part in many opera films which have toured the world. He comes to Dublin to sing the part of Iago in Verdi's "*Otello*."

### LEO PUDIS

(Bass) has sung with the Santa Cecilia Orchestra of Rome, and at the principal Theatres of Italy, the Fenice of Venice, the Verdi of Trieste, Massimo of Palermo, Bellini of Catania and at the Radio Italiana Opera seasons. He has also appeared in buffo roles at the Opera houses of Lisbon and Brussels and in season at the Stoll Theatre, London. He has appeared in concerts in Paris, Geneva, Zurich and Amsterdam.

Leo Pudis is at present a leading buffo bass at the Städtische Oper Berlin.



### CAMILLO L. RIGHINI

(Bass). Precise and versatile artist, he has sung large and small roles in very many opera houses. During the course of his long career he has appeared all over the world, always distinguishing himself for the artistry of his presentations.





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### REGOLO ROMANI

(Tenor). Born at Rovigo in the Veneto, he studied in the Conservatoire there, first violin and then singing. He continued his vocal studies in Milan under the guidance of the famous baritone Ghirardini and made his debut with great success in 1956 as Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Since then he has appeared in many other Italian and foreign theatres, including Genoa, Venice, Vienna, and has taken part in tournées in France, Switzerland and England. In the presence of Pope Pius XII in the Auditorium of Rome he sang an Oratorio of Perosi and received the congratulations of the Holy Father. In Dublin he sings Allegra's "Ave Maria," chosen by the author.

### RENZO SCORSONI

(Baritone). Studied in Rome, his home town. In 1952 he won the "bel canto" competition at Bologna and the following year that of the Teatro Sperimentale at Spoleto, which operates in conjunction with the Opera at Rome. In a short time he has crossed the footlights in many Italian theatres, proving himself a singer of superb style and of generous voice. At Dublin this year he will sing the part of Gerard in *Andrea Chenier* and in other operas.



### ERNESTO VEZZOSI

(Baritone). Made his debut at the Teatro Regio in Parma and then passed on to the Fenice in Venice, the Verdi in Trieste, the S. Carlo in Naples and others. Has taken part in tournées in Germany, Holland, Egypt, France, England and Ireland.





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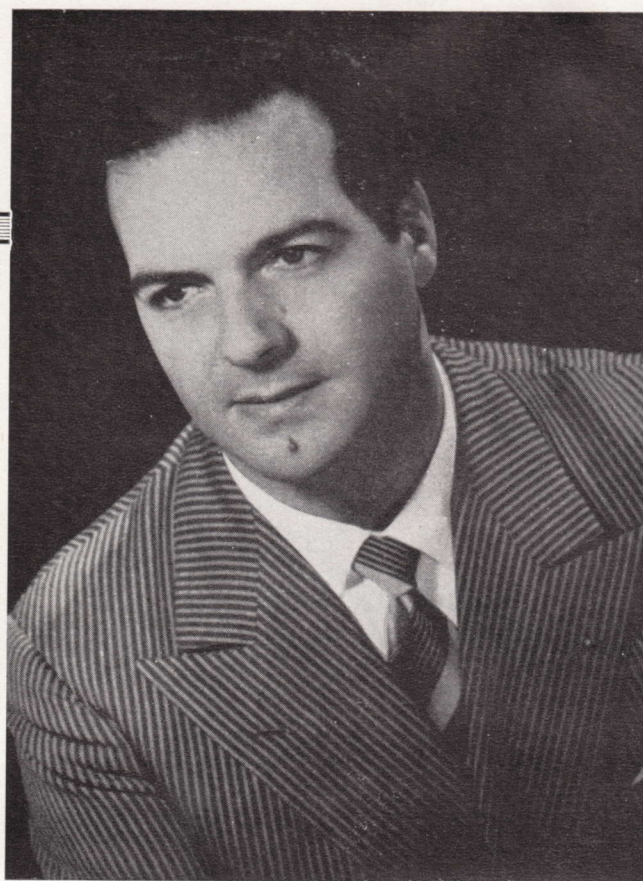
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## PAOLO SILVERI

Paolo Silveri was born in Ofena, a small town in the province of Aquila d'Abruzzo. He studied at a college of Dominican friars in Arezzo, and with them learned to appreciate the first principles of music. When he arrived in Rome (he was 18 years of age and had already ventured upon various trades which enabled him to continue to dedicate himself to music) he began his study of singing. He was a pupil at S. Cecilia, where, however, his voice was classified as "bass" and as such he won the scholarship to the Teatro dell'Opera, Rome, where he sang for five years, still a bass, alternating his artistic life with long periods of time spent in the army. In 1943, at the end of the hostilities, he was able to dedicate himself completely to his studies, which he wanted to work out for himself, according to a certain method. When the right occasion came he made a brilliant debut at the Teatro dell'Opera, as Germont in *Traviata*, in January, 1944.

From that day on the doors of the most important opera houses in the world were open to him, and it can be said that Silveri had sung everywhere. In fact, the stages of many theatres are familiar to him, those of La Scala Milan, the Metropolitan New York, Covent Garden London, the Opera Paris, the Gaiety Dublin, the Municipal Rio de Janeiro, the Municipal Caracas, and at the festivals at Edinburgh, Zurich, Wiesbaden, Stuttgart, Lausanne, etc. In Dublin on 30th May, 1956, after singing *Rigoletto*, which closed the official season, Silveri announced to the public that he was retiring from the stage to take on a new self-imposed course of study. He came to Dublin in 1958 as artistic director of an Italian company which was engaged by him and which enjoyed tremendous success. This time he returns again to give us the honour of his world debut as tenor in the very exacting part of "Otello."



## WILLIAM RICHARDS,

### Chorus Master

Member of the Welsh National Opera Company from its foundation.

Member of the Lyrian Singers of Welsh B.B.C. fame.

Producer for the major Drama Festivals in Wales.

Musical Director and Producer for several Welsh amateur opera societies.

Since coming to Dublin 3½ years ago, he has produced a number of plays for the St. James's Gate Drama Group and has conducted one of the musical shows in the Rupert Guinness Hall.



## CAMILLO PARRAVICINI, Stage Set Designer

Son of Angelo Parravicini, the designer who worked for many years at La Scala, Milan, Camillo Parravicini was born in Milan in 1903, and after studying at the Accademia di Brera he became a pupil of his father and worked with him. Since 1926 he has been living in Rome where he is in charge of his own studio. Besides designing sets for the Opera House in Rome, he has done scenes and sketches for some of the most important theatres in the world. For the Dublin Grand Opera Society he has arranged various sets, among which we may number *Ballo in Maschera*, *Aïda*, *Andrea Chenier*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Ave Maria* and *Otello*.

*Lighting Effects* - - - *Harry Morrison*

*Stage Manager* - - - *Tom Jones*



# AVE MARIA

*Opera in two Acts by Alberto Donini from G. Zorzi's drama. Music by SALVATORE ALLEGRA.*



*Scene from Act I*

*Designed by Prof. Parravicini.*

## ACT I

The action takes place in a country village in the Tuscan Appennines. It is a feast day and there is to be a procession in honour of the Madonna. The peasants make ready to join the procession. Some knock at the cottage door of Maria (Soprano), a devout woman, to bring her with them. Maria, however, will not leave her home because to-day her son, Bista, will return to her. For a whole year she has waited for this day since Bista was sent to prison after using his knife in a fight with another over one Lena, a woman of ill-repute. Old Maria is frightened, knowing that even now this Lena is hovering near her cottage to intercept the young man whom she has already led astray.

Maria is visited and consoled by Sagro (Baritone), an old shepherd. When he is gone, she kneels before the Madonna. Her fervent prayer is for the protection and repentance of her son and for this grace she offers to the Madonna, not the customary votive token of a heart wrought in silver, but the sacrifice of her own troubled heart and her life.

Bista (Tenor), entering, is waylaid by Lena (Soprano) who urges him to return with her to the bright life of the town. "*Your Mother,*" she says "*has the harvest money — she will give it to you.*"

Lena leaves him fighting a losing battle against her old fascination for him. She is sure of her victim.

The procession passes to the strains of the "*Ave Maria.*"



## ACT II

Maria is alone in her cottage with Bista. Vainly the unhappy woman tries to penetrate the obstinate silence of her son. When at last he speaks it is to assert with bitter words his right to live the life he chooses and to demand the money he needs for that. Roughly flinging his mother aside, Bista seizes and forces open the chest where Maria keeps her slender hoard. "No Bista! Not like that — not as a thief" she cries as she falls to the ground and, calling to the Madonna, repeats her offering — "O Santa Madre! Take this heart of mine!"

A profound change abruptly comes over the young man as, shaken by sudden remorse and repentance, he lifts his mother up and watches while tenderly she binds the bleeding hand that he injured in his assault upon the iron-shod chest. It is her last maternal duty to him, for the Madonna has accepted the sacrifice of this human mother's life in purchase of her son's repentance. To the music of the "*Ave Maria*" and the chiming of the church bells, the curtain falls.



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# CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA

PIETRO MASCAGNI, 1863-1945

Mascagni's *verismo* melodrama in one Act had its première at the Costanzi Theatre (now Teatro dell' Opera), Rome, in May, 1890. This, Mascagni's first opera, was a sensational success from the start, but none of his many subsequent works approached its popularity. Despite the title "Rustic Chivalry," the tale it tells is in no wise chivalrous. Giovanni Verga's novel, from which the opera is derived, is a violent story of Sicilian love and revenge.

The scene of the opera is a Sicilian village on Easter Morning in the late nineteenth century. A village girl, Lola, was loved by Turiddu (Sicilian for Salvatore) before he went away for his military service. On returning home he finds her married to Alfio, the well-to-do village teamster. On the rebound, Turiddu turns to Santuzza, but when our story opens he has secretly taken up once more with Lola.

The orchestral prelude is built on melodies from the opera. It is halted by a novel feature in opera as, with the curtain still lowered, the voice of Turiddu (Tenor) is heard in the *Siciliano* or serenade to Lola, sung in Sicilian dialect to harp accompaniment.

The curtain rises on the village square on a bright Easter Sunday morning. There is a chiming of bells and a happy chorus as villagers and country folk gather before entering the Church for Mass. Tension soon invades this festive scene, however, with the entry of Santuzza (Soprano) in search of Turiddu. His mother, old Lucia (Mezzo-soprano) is busy about her wine tavern. Though disturbed by Santuzza's questions she tells the girl that Turiddu has gone to Francofonte for supplies of wine. But no, says Santuzza, he was seen here in the village last night. They are interrupted by Alfio (Baritone), Lola's husband, who comes in with a rousing song all about his horses, his wagon and his pretty Lola. When Lucia tells him, too, that Turiddu has gone to Francofonte for more of his (Alfio's) favourite wine, Alfio remarks unsuspectingly that he had seen Turiddu near his cottage only that morning.


Alfio goes off and now begins the splendid Easter Hymn in praise of the Risen Christ, sung by a divided chorus. As it ends all enter the Church save Lucia and Santuzza. In her impassioned narrative "*Voi*

*lo sapete, o mamma, prima d'andar soldato*," Santuzza pours out the whole miserable story to the sympathetic Lucia of her betrayal and abandonment by Turiddu. With a prayer for Santuzza, Lucia enters the Church. Turiddu, the heartbreaker, appearing is annoyed to find Santuzza waiting for him and obviously preparing to make a scene. Their highly dramatic duet, commencing with Turiddu's "*Tu qui, Santuzza*" ("*You here, Santuzza*"), is a furious exchange of recriminations to the point where Lola (Mezzo-soprano) makes a brief appearance on her way to Mass. When she has left, after some provocative remarks to both Santuzza and Turiddu, the duet is resumed. Santuzza imploring Turiddu to return to her is totally spurned. In a fury of jealousy she screams a curse after him as he goes away.

In this mood Santuzza is found by Alfio and she loses no time about enlightening him of Turiddu's affair with his wife. Alfio's reactions and his threats against Turiddu are so violent and menacing that Santuzza regrets what she has done—but too late.


For a few moments the gathering tension relaxes as, with the stage quite empty, the orchestra plays the lovely *Intermezzo* after which the tragedy moves swiftly forward. Mass over, the people emerge followed by Turiddu and Lola (together). Turiddu calls for wine all round and he and the chorus join in the gay *Brindisi* (drinking song) in which he openly toasts Lola. Alfio, entering, refuses Turiddu's proffered drink — ("*It would be as poison to me*"). A challenge is given and accepted in the approved Sicilian manner with the two embracing and Turiddu biting Alfio's ear. The women leave. Before withdrawing for the fight with knives (off stage), Turiddu, slightly heady from the wine, has a moment of remorse when he asks pardon of Alfio for the wrong he has done him. Addressing his mother (who is unaware of the impending fight) in the passage "*Mamma, quel vino e generoso*," Turiddu bids her bless him and care for Santuzza should he not return from whence he is going. The fight is brief and with the voice of a woman screaming off-stage "*Hanno ammazzato compare Turiddu*" ("*Neighbour Turiddu's killed*"), the curtain falls quickly on this Sicilian tragedy.





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# DON PASQUALE

GAETANO DONIZETTI, 1797-1848

Born in the North Italian town of Bergamo where he is commemorated by the beautiful Theatre bearing his name, Gaetano Donizetti was the composer of nearly seventy operas. About six of these have retained their place in the popular repertory. Two of them, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *L'Elisir d'Amore*, were given by the Society last year. The 1959 choice is the *opera buffa*, *Don Pasquale*, which is rated by many as the composer's best work. Its brilliant score is matched by the natural wit and comedy of an excellent, if conventional, libretto.

*Don Pasquale* was first performed in Paris in January, 1843. The scene is laid in Rome in the early nineteenth century. There are three Acts.

## ACT I

The scintillating Overture establishes a cheerful mood and the curtain rises on a room in Don Pasquale's house. The Don (Bass)—a stock figure in early comedy—is old and crusty, but contemplates matrimony. We find him awaiting his friend and confidant, Doctor Malatesta, whom he has entrusted with the office of finding him a suitable bride. The Doctor (Baritone) soon arrives. Having failed to dissuade Pasquale from his silly idea of marrying so late in life, and in order (as we shall see) to help Ernesto, Pasquale's nephew, Malatesta has devised a complicated plan to circumvent the marriage. Pursuing this plan, he tells Pasquale that he has found the very wife for him—a lovely young creature, still in a convent school, as good as she is beautiful, and, incidentally, the Doctor's own sister, Sofronia. Malatesta's description of her in his aria, *Bella siccome un angelo* ("Sweet as an angel") so entrances Pasquale that Malatesta is sent off to produce this paragon at once. The Don, alone, foolishly pictures himself as a fiery romantic bridegroom ("*Ah, un fuoco insolito!*") and relishes the prospect of the shock his marriage will mean to his impertinent young nephew, Ernesto, and his expectations. When Ernesto (Tenor) enters the old man discourses on his favourite topic, the necessity of Ernesto marrying a certain wealthy lady. But Ernesto will not hear of it because he already loves another—Norina. Greatly annoyed, Pasquale bluntly announces his own proposed marriage, telling Ernesto that he will have to leave the house and disinheriting him as well. All this emerges in their duet which is introduced by Ernesto's bewailing this shattering of his dreams in the delicate aria,

"*Sogno soave e casto*". The young man is further disillusioned when he hears that Doctor Malatesta, on whose support he had been counting, now appears to be abetting his uncle's own marriage.

The second scene introduces Ernesto's sweetheart, Norina (Soprano), in her own house. We find her reading a romantic novel and musing over a tender love scene in the cavatina, "*Quel guardo, il cavaliere*". A dismaying letter arrives from Ernesto and soon after it Doctor Malatesta. He has come to explain to Norina how he proposes to avert the serious difficulties which Pasquale's marriage would create for Ernesto and herself. He hopes to cure Pasquale finally of this foolishness by arranging for him a mock marriage. Norina will be passed off as Malatesta's sister, Sofronia, in the role of "bride" while his cousin will masquerade as the Notary. The ceremony over, it will be up to Norina herself to make life so miserable for Pasquale that he will be only too glad after his experience to renounce all matrimonial ambitions when, in due time, he learns that the marriage was bogus. Norina enters into the spirit of the thing and in the merry duet, "*Pronta io son*," Malatesta rehearses her in the role she is to play.

## ACT II

Ernesto is preparing to leave Pasquale's house dejectedly proclaiming in the aria, "*Cercherò lontana terra*", his firm intention of setting off to end his days in some foreign land. On his exit, Pasquale comes in preening himself and very satisfied with the fine figure he believes he still cuts at 70 years of age. Malatesta duly arrives with Norina, the "bride". Pasquale is much gratified at the excessive modesty of her demeanour though she obstinately refuses to remove her heavy veil. When she does so at last, the Don is so entranced by her beauty that he wants the marriage to take place there and then. The counterfeit contract is drawn up with Pasquale directing the inserting of the clause that his lovely young wife shall be mistress of all his property. The unexpected appearance of Ernesto, ignorant of the plot and about to make a scene, threatens to upset all Malatesta's work. The Doctor, however, manages to put Ernesto "au courant" with what is really happening so that he is even persuaded to act as witness.

No sooner is the ceremony over than Norina suddenly becomes a tartar and takes over control. First,



she cancels Pasquale's order that Ernesto must leave the house — her husband is so old that she will need Ernesto as escort. Next, the establishment must be entirely refurnished; six horses and two carriages are to be ordered and at least twenty-four extra servants engaged — all young and handsome. The Act ends in a quartet where each character expresses his or her reactions to this sensational turn of events.

### ACT III

Pasquale's house again. Norina is revelling in a tremendous spending spree, indifferent to Pasquale's mounting rage as he tots up the fabulous bills. Worse still, she is preparing to go to the theatre without him. His attempts to prevent her earns for poor Pasquale a heap of abuse and a slap across the face. After a moment's remorse at having overplayed her hand in striking the old man, Norina trips off telling Pasquale that bed would suit him best at his age. As she goes, she purposely drops a letter. From this the Don learns that Norina is to have an assignation that very evening in his own garden, the lover's signal to be a serenade. For Pasquale this is the last straw and he sends for Malatesta to advise him about a divorce. When he has left, the army of new servants assemble, and in an amusing chorus they discuss the recent goings-on in the house, the while admonishing each other to be prudent as this diverting employment is far too profitable to lose. From a brief exchange between Ernesto

and Malatesta, it emerges that the letter Pasquale found is all part of Malatesta's plan. Ernesto exits hastily as Pasquale approaches to unburden his woes to Malatesta, wailing that he would now be a thousand times better off if he had never married at all. In the patter duet commencing "*Cheti, cheti, immantinenti*," the pair settle on a counter-plan — to surprise the couple at their assignation and send away the guilty wife.

Scene 2 takes place in the garden. Outside Ernesto sings his serenade, "*Com' è gentil*" — one of the most beautiful of tenor arias. The equally entrancing and very famous duet "*Tornami a dir che m'ami*" — (*Tell me again you love me*) — follows when Norina admits him. At its conclusion Pasquale and Malatesta appear and, according to plan, Ernesto slips into the house unseen. When Pasquale demands to know who her companion was Norina puts on a fine show of temperament and injured innocence, defying his orders that she must leave his house. Here, the able Doctor Malatesta takes the situation in hand and manages affairs so beautifully that in no time everyone is happy again—the Don to be rid of Norina who plagued him so, and Ernesto to receive his uncle's ready consent to his union with the same lady and a very handsome annual allowance from his uncle thrown in.

So the story ends very happily indeed in the quartet introduced by the master-brain, Doctor Malatesta, with the words, "*Bravo, bravo, Don Pasquale!*"

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# RIGOLETTO

GIUSEPPE VERDI, 1813-1901

This Opera was composed by the 38-year-old Verdi for the Fenice Theatre, Venice, where it had its première in March, 1851. It was the first of his long series of world successes and remains firmly in the repertoire as one of the most popular of all operas. The libretto by Franco Maria Piave is an adaptation of Hugo's *Le Roi s'amuse*. To satisfy the strict Austrian censorship of the day, which would not tolerate a public representation of attempted regicide, the plot was transferred from the Court of France to the ducal palace at Mantua.

★ ★ ★

## ACT I

After a short orchestral prelude the curtain rises on a ball in the ducal palazzo. The dissolute Duke of Mantua (Tenor) enters telling a courtier, Borsa, of his latest infatuation — this time with a young girl whom he has noticed in church every feast day. Just now he is openly flirtatious with the Countess Ceprano (Mezzo soprano) to the Count's obvious annoyance. In the flippant aria *Questa o quella* ("This one or that one") the Duke declares that all women are fair game to him if they are pretty. Ceprano (Bass) is mocked by Rigoletto (Baritone), the Court jester, a hunchback, whose privileged gibes all the courtiers must endure. Cynically Rigoletto suggests to the Duke that the affair with the Countess would be furthered if the husband were made away with. Rigoletto wanders off and Marullo (Bass) amuses the others with the story that the buffoon has an innamorata! In this they see a chance of revenge on their tormentor. Now Monterone (Baritone) forces his way in to denounce the Duke, the betrayer of his daughter. He too is cruelly mocked by Rigoletto, but before being dragged away the old man launches a

father's curse on the hunchback, who is left cringing in superstitious terror.

★ ★ ★

## ACT II

The double setting shows a street and, opening on it, the courtyard of Rigoletto's house wherein his treasured daughter Gilda (Soprano) is kept in strictest seclusion. Rigoletto enters still brooding on Monterone's curse that haunts his mind. He is thinking of the daughter whom the courtiers have taken to be his mistress. A sinister figure emerges from the shadows. It is Sparafucile (Bass), a bravo, a professional hired assassin. To Sparafucile's offer of services at a reasonable fee Rigoletto replies he has no present use for them. Alone, in the splendid aria *Pari siamo*, his jesting thrown aside, Rigoletto reflects bitterly on his deformity and his ignominious employment in the Duke's household. An affecting and very beautiful duet ensues between Gilda and himself in which memories of her dead mother are recalled. But the Duke has discovered Gilda's dwelling, to which he now gains entry, while Rigoletto is still in the house, by bribing Giovanna (Mezzo soprano), Gilda's duenna. He remains concealed in the courtyard. Before leaving, Rigoletto cautions Giovanna once more to guard his treasured Gilda well. When he is gone, the Duke reveals himself as Gualtier Maldè, the supposed student, whom Gilda had often noticed in the church. A love duet follows (*E il sol dell' anima*). The Duke departs and in the coloratura aria *Caro nome* the young girl muses on her first love. Outside, the courtiers are gathering for the abduction that Ceprano has planned for his revenge. By means of a trick Rigoletto, blindfolded, is involved in the escapade, not suspecting its true purpose. When he discovers the outrage he recalls the curse and the curtain falls to his anguished cry *La maledizione!*



### ACT III

In the aria *Parmi veder le lagrime* the Duke laments the loss of Gilda, disappeared he knows not where. The courtiers, however, come to tell him the trick played on Rigoletto and that Gilda is already in the palazzo. After the Duke's exit Rigoletto appears, distractedly searching for his daughter and suspecting her to be with the Duke. His appeals for pity to the courtiers are received with jeers until they realise the girl they have abducted is not his mistress but his daughter. When the distraught Gilda rushes in, Rigoletto, suddenly invested with great dignity, rails against the baseness of these courtiers and orders them from his presence (*Corteggiani vil razza dannata*). Intimidated by the change in Rigoletto, the courtiers go and Rigoletto hears from his daughter the story of her abduction. The Act concludes in a blazing duet, Rigoletto vowing vengeance on the Duke while Gilda, fearful for her lover, seeks to soften his wrath.



### ACT IV

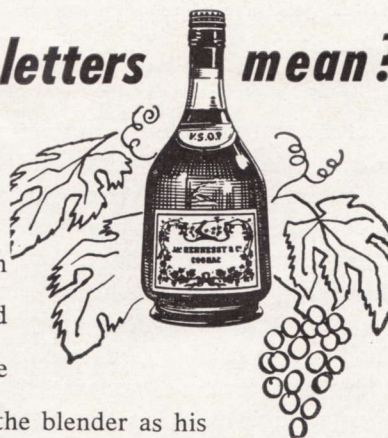
Another double scene; Sparafucile's lonely dilapidated inn and beside it the banks of the river Mincio. The Duke has found another charmer,

Maddalena (Mezzo soprano), the sister of Sparafucile. Rigoletto has brought Gilda to witness for herself her lover's perfidy. Disguised this time as a soldier, the Duke is drinking and gambling. Debonairly he sings of the fickleness of women (*La donna è mobile*). This aria leads into the great quartet. At its conclusion Rigoletto, sending Gilda away, summons Sparafucile and hires him to murder the stranger in the inn, the body to be delivered to himself in a sack. A storm comes up. The Duke decides to remain overnight at the inn and retires. Maddalena, who has succumbed to the young man's charm, endeavours to dissuade her brother, suggesting that if he substituted another victim he might still claim the reward. Gilda has, however, stolen back and overhearing the conversation of the pair, resolves to save her lover by exchanging her own life for his. Thus it is she who becomes the victim and it is her body, enclosed in the sack, that is delivered to her father. Rigoletto, his vengeance satisfied as he thinks, is about to consign his burden to the river when the voice of the Duke reaches him in a reprise of *La donna è mobile*. Tearing open the sack, the dying Gilda is revealed. With her last breath she begs forgiveness for her lover and herself. The Opera ends with the crashing chords of the curse—*La maledizione*—which has exacted the full penalty.

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TOP LEFT : A specimen of Irish Illumination — Portrait of St. Mark or St. Luke. "Book of Kells." TOP RIGHT : Examples of pre-historic Glass Beads found in Ireland. CENTRE : Crozier of Cormac MacCarthy, King-Bishop of Cashel, who died in A.D. 1138, found in a stone tomb in an outside recess at Cormac's Chapel, Rock of Cashel. CENTRE LEFT : Encaustic pavement tile, examples of which are to be found in many abbeys and churches, such as Mellifont, Kilkenny, Kells, Kildare and Dublin. CENTRE RIGHT : An example of Irish book-binding. Dublin 1779 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London). Above it, one of the enamelled bosses on the Ardagh Chalice. LOWER RIGHT : Portion of the Frontispiece of the "Epistle of Jerome" in the "Book of Durrow." LOWER LEFT : Sculpture on the Round Tower at Devenish Island, Lough Erne. LOWER CENTRE : Four examples of enamelling. From top : an enamelled boss on the "Shrine of St. Patrick's Bell," an enamelled button, early Christian period, an enamelled boss on the "Moylough Belt" and one of the enamelled bosses on the "Tara Brooch."

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# ANDREA CHÉNIER

UMBERTO GIORDANO, 1867-1948

Giordano, Mascagni and Puccini were the leading exponents of the *verismo* school of Italian Opera. *ANDREA CHÉNIER* was Giordano's fourth opera but his first to achieve enduring popularity. The première was at the Scala, Milan, in March, 1896. The first Irish performance was the production by the Dublin Grand Opera Society on 23rd April, 1957.

The life and death of the young French poet, André Chénier, are the broad basis of Illica's libretto. (Illica was also one of Puccini's most successful librettists). Chénier espoused the cause of the Revolution but was later alienated by its excesses. Many of the incidents in the libretto are largely fictional. The setting is Paris at the eve and in the early years of the Revolution.

(Note: The names of the characters are given the forms — French or Italian — in which they appear in the libretto).

## ACT I

At the Château of the Contessa di Coigny a party is about to assemble. It is a gathering of aristocrats ignorant of the fate so soon to overtake the old régime. The Contessa's majordomo is busy directing the servants, one of whom is Carlo Gérard (Baritone), who has imbibed revolutionary ideas from reading Jean Jacques Rousseau, besides nourishing a hopeless love for Maddalena, the Contessa's daughter. The spectacle of his old father struggling with a heavy piece of furniture incites him to an angry soliloquy (*aria*: "*Son sessant' anni*") on their employers' inhumanity and a prediction that very soon his own class will rise in hate to destroy their oppressors. The Contessa (Mezzo soprano) enters with Maddalena (Soprano) and Bersi (Soprano), the latter's mulatto maid. The Contessa fusses about the arrangements for the evening and packs Maddalena off to don her party dress. Maddalena delays to complain to Bersi about the bore of dressing up. Guests arrive and an Abbé, just come from Paris, brings news of the King's capitulation to the Tiers État. Though much dismayed by this, the volatile company quickly turns to the frivolous entertainment of the evening, which includes affected renderings of music and poetry. Chénier is invited to recite some of his verses but brusquely declines until, piqued by Maddalena's banter and moved by the attraction she holds for him, he launches into the splendid *Improvviso* ("*Un dì all' azzurro spazio*")—one of the best known

pieces in the opera. Commencing with a formal theme of love, Chénier mid-way switches to biting invective on the social evils of the time in terms that affront his aristocratic hearers, clerical and lay. The excitement resulting is fanned by the sudden incursion of a crowd of starving men and women led by Gérard. Ironically he introduces them — "*Sua Grandezza la Miseria* — His Highness Poverty!" They are quickly hustled out but not before Gérard has torn off his livery, his badge of servitude, and flung it down as a challenge before his masters.

## ACT II

Five years later, 1794, outside a café in Paris. The Revolution is well established and Gérard is a leader. Chénier too has gained fame but has come to be suspected as a critic of the Terror. Bersi, as a "*Meravigliosa*", is enjoying the freedom of the times but has yet retained contact with Maddalena. Gérard, still haunted by the memory of Maddalena (as Maddalena is by Chénier's) has set his spy, the *Incredibile* (Tenor), to trace her. The spy, aware that Bersi is the link, has noted too that she and the poet are acquainted. Just now Bersi covertly seeks to gain Chénier's attention while he sits alone at a café table. Contemptuously she dismisses the *Incredibile*'s efforts to engage her in conversation. Chénier's friend, Roucher (Bass), comes to give him the passport which would permit him to leave France and avoid the danger in which he stands, but Chénier does not take it. He has been intrigued by frequent strange letters from a mysterious woman and he has come to believe that his destiny is romantically bound to hers. The last letter has sought an assignation. The argument with Roucher is interrupted by the passing of a group of Deputies who are excitedly hailed by the crowd. They include Gérard himself, Foucher, Sièyes, Carnot and Robespierre. Bersi, still watched by the *Incredibile*, whispers to Chénier that a woman in great peril and distress is coming to ask his help. It is Maddalena and in the duet that follows she recalls to Chénier their meeting in happier days at her mother's château. Desperately she pleads for the protection which he willingly concedes. However, their attempt to leave together is frustrated by Gérard, brought there by the spy. A sword fight takes place in which at the moment of being wounded by him Gérard recognises his former friend, Andrea Chénier. He warns Chénier that his name is on Tinville's list



for execution. In the confusion Maddalena, Chénier and Roucher escape.

### ACT III

The Revolutionary Tribunal. The Sanculotto Mathieu (Bass), a serio-comic figure, harangues the crowd. Gérard, recovered from his wound, tells the crowd of the growing threat to the new France from the counter-revolutionaries and their invading foreign allies. The women respond to his appeal for funds by donating their trinkets. Blind old Madelon (Mezzo-soprano) who has already lost all her sons to the Revolution now dedicates her last grandson to the cause. The mood of the crowd changes. They dance and sing the patriotic "*Carmagnole*". The Incredible comes to tell Gérard that, as the newsboys are already shouting, the poet Chénier has been arrested. The woman (Maddalena), he says, will follow her lover to the Tribunal. At the Spy's urging Gérard begins to draft Chénier's indictment. As he writes, Gérard's conflict of mind is revealed in the great baritone aria, "*Nemico della patria*" ("An enemy of the fatherland") where he reflects upon the baseness of what he is about to do—to contrive the death of his friend not as an act of patriotic justice but, he admits, to destroy his rival in love. Maddalena herself arrives and in the duet Gérard tells of his love for her since the days of his serfdom, exulting now that she is in his power. The unexpected declaration suggests to Maddalena the path of escape taken by other heroines of opera—she offers herself to Gérard in exchange for her lover's life. In the principal soprano aria of the opera—"La mamma morta"—she relates the killing of her mother and the burning of their home by the mob; how since

then she has lived in fear and hunger, sustained only by Bersi's affection and her love for Chénier.

Moved to remorse and shame by Maddalena's constancy and radiant vision of love as she describes it in the soaring phrases of the aria, Gérard agrees to try and save Chénier. The crowd returns to be pleasantly entertained by the day's blood-bath. Several victims are quickly consigned to the guillotine including a young woman, Idia Legray. Chénier is charged with writing against the Revolution. In the aria "*Sì, fui soldato*" he defiantly asserts that his sword and his pen have honourably served *La Patrie* and that he is no traitor. Gérard courageously intervenes to deny the charge and to reproach the State that murders the poets that were its inspiration. The crowd, however, howls for the death sentence and Chénier is condemned.

### ACT IV

Shortly before dawn in the Saint Lazare Prison. Encouraged by Roucher, Chénier reads the last verses he has written. Framed in the aria "*Come un bel dì di maggio*" ("As on a fine May day"), the verses are a lyrical farewell to life. Gérard arrives with Maddalena. Having failed to save the poet he has at least been able to secure that Maddalena will be with him at the last. More, he connives with her in bribing the gaoler so that she may substitute herself for one of the condemned. Idia Legray, and go herself with Chénier to the guillotine. Gérard hurries away to seek Robespierre in a last attempt to save Chénier. But the tragedy moves rapidly on to the finale and the exciting music of the great closing duet reaches a climax as the day dawns redly and the pair are led off to execution.

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# IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

GIOACCHINO ROSSINI, 1792-1868

When first produced at the Argentina Theatre, Rome, in 1816, when the composer was 24 years of age, Rossini's masterpiece of *opera buffa*—"IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA"—was a fiasco. This was due less to novelties in the composer's treatment of the subject than to organised opposition in the theatre by supporters of Paisiello, then one of Italy's most popular composers who had also set the Figaro story to music. However, Rossini's "Barber" quickly became established as a universal favourite and so it has remained ever since. Its appeal lies, no doubt, in its sparkling light-hearted music, its succession of entrancing arias, duets and concerted pieces, as well as in the wit and humour of its libretto. This was by Cesare Sterbini and was founded on episodes from Beaumarchais' "Figaro," later episodes of which were used by Mozart for "*LE NOZZE DI FIGARO*." The overture used for the "Barber" was originally composed by Rossini for his opera "*ELIZABETH, QUEEN OF ENGLAND*."

## ACT I

A street in Seville before the house of Doctor Bartolo (Bass) in the early morning. The elderly Doctor is planning to marry his pretty ward Rosina (Soprano) for her good looks as well as for her fortune. To further this design he keeps the girl in strictest seclusion despite which the young grandee, Count Almaviva (Tenor), has noted the lovely recluse and fallen in love with her. As the curtain rises the Count, incognito and attended by his servant Fiorello, is about to serenade Rosina, accompanied by a band of hired musicians. The serenade "*Ecco ridente in cielo*" evokes no response from the silent house. Handsomely rewarded, the musicians go off with embarrassingly noisy expressions of thanks. Off stage a cheerful early-morning voice is heard. It is Figaro (Baritone). In the very famous patter song "*Largo al factotum della città*" he proceeds to give a very extrovert account of the superior ingenuity for which he is much sought after by all as guide, philosopher and friend. Very naturally Count Almaviva enlists the aid and advice of this paragon. A brief interruption is caused by the emergence of Doctor Bartolo (Bass) who sets off grumbling on his way after ensuring the doors are locked and barred behind him. Almaviva, at Figaro's urging, tries another serenade wherein he gives his name as Lindoro. This time the unseen Rosina (Soprano) responds but a promising exchange is cut off as Rosina is, apparently, startled by somebody within the house. Almaviva begs

Figaro to sharpen his wits and quickly devise a plan for meeting Rosina. The promise of a golden reward is a potent stimulus to Figaro and in the tenor-baritone duet "*All' idea di quel metallo*" he unfolds a stratagem whereby with the aid of Almaviva's cousin, the Colonel, the Count disguised as an officer will billet himself in Doctor Bartolo's house. For their different reasons, both extol this ingenious invention ("*Che invenzione!*") and the scene concludes in the sparkling music of the duet.

## Scene II

In Bartolo's house. Rosina is introduced at last in the coloratura showpiece "*Una voce poco fa*." Like Figaro, she can give a good account of herself and is evidently a young woman of spirit. She has, indeed, already decided that Lindoro (i.e. the Count) shall be hers—"Si, Lindoro mio sarà." While really (she says) a sweet and docile sort of girl, she can be a viper if crossed and can play many a trick ("*Cento trappole*") to thwart the Doctor's marriage designs. Even already she has written a note to Lindoro which Figaro shall convey. Figaro himself enters, soon followed by Bartolo in a very bad humour. Figaro hides. Now enters Bartolo's crony and Rosina's music-teacher, Don Basilio (Bass), a seedy type of schemer in minor orders. He has a nose for news and reports the Count's interest in Rosina. Greatly alarmed, Bartolo decides he must marry the girl at once, 'tho Basilio favours employing against the Count the "slander method," whose insidious efficacy he illustrates in the great aria "*La calunnia*." When the pair withdraw to fix the marriage contract Figaro re-appears and tells Rosina all he has overheard. A charming duet follows — "*Dunque io son*." When Figaro suggests she write a little letter to Lindoro, he is astounded to find the letter already written and has to admit that his pupil has little to learn from him in the art of intrigue. Bartolo returns, suspicious as usual, but Rosina cleverly parries his questions. Loud batterings on the door herald Almaviva, duly disguised as a very drunken soldier (the regimental physician, in fact!).

Bartolo's "exemption from billeting" order is brushed aside. The "soldier" manages to convey to Rosina that he is her Lindoro but his outrageous behaviour soon provokes such general uproar that a crowd collects outside and the police arrive to quell the disturbance. Almaviva avoids arrest by revealing himself to the police officer as a privileged grandee of Spain. The Act ends riotously in the brilliant con-



certed piece "*Freddo e immobile!*" ("*Cold, immobile—like a statue!*").

## ACT II

Doctor Bartolo's house again. The Doctor having ascertained that the soldier was bogus is now convinced that Count Almaviva must have had some hand in the recent doings. Now enters a strange cleric. In the amusing scene that follows the "cleric" (who is none other than the Count in a new disguise) announces himself with much ceremony as Don Alonso, a pupil of Don Basilio. Basilio, he alleges, has suddenly fallen ill and has sent himself instead to give Rosina her daily music lesson. Bartolo is uneasy because the "cleric's" face is strangely familiar. After some by-play to allay Bartolo's suspicious somewhat, the music lesson begins but Bartolo keeps an eye on the pair. Rosina, however, quickly recognises her Lindoro.

In the "*Lesson Scene*" the prima donna traditionally interpolates a brilliant coloratura piece of her own choosing. Whatever her song may be it always bores the Doctor who insists on rendering his own favourite sentimental ditty. Figaro now begins to shave Bartolo and, in the course of his preparations, manages to get hold of the key to the balcony door through which the lovers are to elope that night. The sudden appearance of Basilio produces a highly embarrassing situation from which develops the big

quintet "*Don Basilio! cosa veggo?*" With the help of a purse of money from the Count, Basilio is persuaded he is a scarlatina victim and must go home to bed. The shaving is resumed, but Bartolo overhears the lovers as they perfect their elopement plans. Angrily he scatters them.

An interlude of quiet is provided by Berta, Bartolo's old housekeeper (Mezzo-soprano). In her *arietta* she comments sourly on all this craze for marrying, but privately laments she is herself an old maid. After the orchestral "storm music," Figaro and the Count steal in from the balcony ready for the elopement. Rosina learns that her Lindoro is really the Count himself. When some misunderstandings have been cleared up, the lovers join in the duet "*Ah, qual colpo*" which become a lively trio "*Zitti, zitti*" as Figaro impatiently urges them to get on with their elopement. As they finally reach the balcony Figaro cries out that the escape ladder is gone. In this crisis Basilio enters followed by a notary—sent for, it turns out, by Bartolo for his own marriage to Rosina. With a bribe and a threat from the Count, this worthy pair are soon induced to marry the Count and Rosina on the spot. They are just in time, for Bartolo now leads in a group of soldiers for the arrest of the Count and Figaro. However, when told by the Count that he may keep Rosina's dowry, the Doctor reconciles himself to the inevitable and the opera ends with the happy chorus "*Amore e fede eterna.*"



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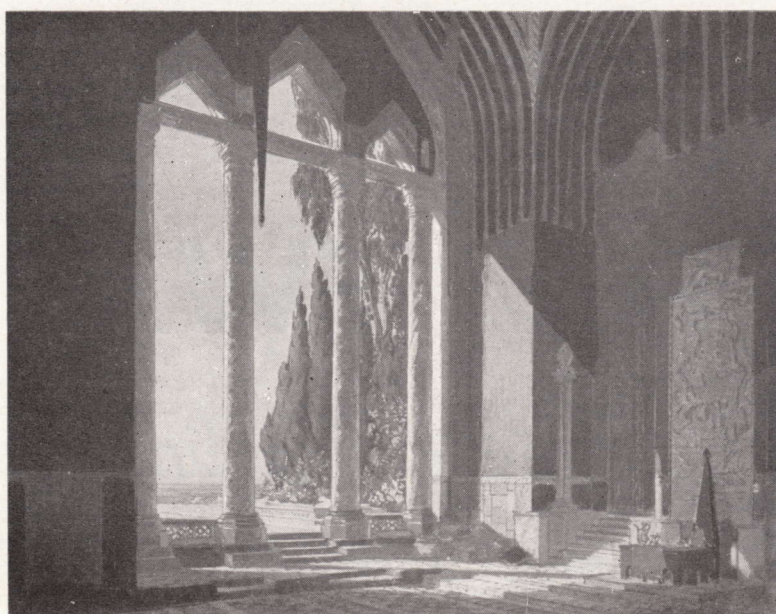
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# OTELLO

GIUSEPPE VERDI, 1813-1901



Scene from Act II

Designed by Prof. Parravicini.

*Otello* was first produced at the Scala, Milan, in February, 1887. In the sixteen years since *Aïda* no new opera had come from Verdi and it seemed that his work had ended until at 74 years of age he startled the musical world with *Otello*, considered by many to be his masterpiece.

Verdi was always an ardent admirer of Shakespeare and had already based an opera on *Macbeth* forty years earlier. His last opera *Falstaff* (1893) was, of course, drawn from *The Merry Wives of Windsor* while the idea of an opera on *King Lear* constantly recurred to him but never matured.

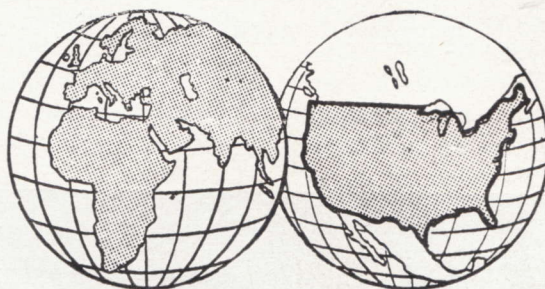
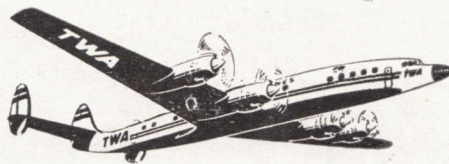
For *Otello* as for *Falstaff*, Verdi had the happy collaboration of a worthy librettist, Arrigo Boito, himself a distinguished poet and composer. Boito's libretto, a masterpiece of its kind, follows Shakespeare

fairly closely, the departures being occasioned mainly by the condensation necessary for musical purposes. Some portions of Shakespeare's play are omitted altogether, notably the first scenes.

Serious musicians long ago discounted charges of "Wagnerism" against *Otello*. The work's greater richness of orchestral colouring, the almost complete resolution of "*recitativo*" into music, its continuity and relative absence of the traditional "set pieces" are new but are now recognised to be not imitative. They are, instead, the true and final development of Verdi's individual genius for which his long life of composition was a preparation.

The setting of the opera is in the Venetian-held island of Cyprus in the fifteenth century.





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## ACT I

It is evening and a great storm rages at sea. The vessel has been sighted which carries the Venetian captain, Otello, back to Cyprus after a naval battle. The fury of the elements is matched by the stupendous orchestral and choral description of the scene as the people watch the threatened ship and pray for its safe arrival in port. Their prayer is heard and Otello (Tenor) steps ashore in one of the most striking of all entrances in opera. To the Cypriots he announces the great tidings of victory — "*Esultate! L'orgoglio musulmano sepolto è in mar . . .*" — ("*Rejoice! The pride of Islam's buried in the sea*"). This announcement made, Otello turns at once to enter the castle where his young wife Desdemona awaits him. As the storm subsides the crowd build a bonfire and celebrate the victory in the chorus "*Fuoco di gioia!*" (In the opera the chorus is assigned a major and indeed most exacting role.) The machiavellian Iago (Baritone) has two hates — Otello and the officer, Cassio, whom Otello promoted over himself to be second-in-command. Iago's thirst for revenge on both is the motive force of the drama. With malice Iago encourages Roderigo (Tenor) in his hopes of Desdemona with whom the latter has fallen in love. Cassio (Tenor) he encourages to drink. Here occurs Iago's famous drinking-song ("*Inaffia l'ugola!*") in which the chorus take part. Aiming at the disgrace of the half-tipsy Cassio, Iago involves him in a brawl with Roderigo. Montano (Bass) intervening is insulted by Cassio, now very drunk, and in the ensuing fight Montano is wounded by Cassio. The general disorders that result arouse Otello who suddenly reappears. Affording a first glimpse of his sudden rages, Otello (to Iago's glee) dismisses Cassio on the spot. All disperse, leaving Otello and Desdemona (Soprano) alone. A magical calm descends and the serenity of the night sets the mood for the supremely beautiful love-duet — "*Già nella notte densa*" — which has been described as the high water mark of Verdi's love music.



## ACT II

A hall in Otello's castle with a garden visible in the background. Pursuing his intrigue, Iago prompts Cassio to seek Desdemona whose intercession alone, he says, can reinstate him in Otello's favour. Cassio falls into the trap. The full evil of Iago's character appears from his famous "*Credo*" — his god is a cruel one; virtue and honour are but hypocrisy; mankind is the plaything of Fate from the cradle to the grave — and after the grave — nothing! Otello entering notes Desdemona in smiling conversation with Cassio. Iago, by hinting at a possible previous

relationship between them, succeeds in planting the first seeds of suspicion in Otello's jealous mind. After an episode where she is greeted in a charming chorus, Desdemona impulsively begins to plead Cassio's cause with her husband. Thus, innocently, she lends colour to Iago's baseless insinuations. Her persistence provokes Otello to an angry outburst. Not comprehending his distress, Desdemona putting her handkerchief to his heated forehead only inflames him further. Roughly Otello throws the handkerchief to the ground. Emilia (Mezzo-Soprano), Iago's wife and Desdemona's lady-in-waiting, picks it up. Iago snatches it from her. (This handkerchief — "*il fazzoletto*" — assumes major dramatic importance later on.) When Otello and Iago are alone, Otello's poisoned imagination races ahead and his Monologue "*Tu! Indietro! fuggi!*" surveys the fancied wreckage of his life — "*Addio! della gloria d'Otello è questo il fin*" — ("*Otello's occupation's gone!*"). In a frenzy he takes Iago by the throat demanding proofs. Iago's response is the "*Dream Song*" relating how once he heard Cassio murmur Desdemona's name in his sleep and curse the Fate that gave her to the Moor. Craftily he goes on to describe a fine embroidered handkerchief he has seen with Cassio. Otello recognises it as his first gift to Desdemona (while we recognise it as the one Iago had earlier snatched from Emilia). Otello, maddened by this tale, cries wildly for Cassio's blood ("*Sangue! Sangue! Sangue!*") and the curtain falls on their stirring "vengeance duet."



## ACT III

The Great Hall of the Castle. A herald announces the imminent arrival of the ambassadors from the Doge of Venice. Otello hardly listens — he must question Desdemona himself. A harrowing scene ensues. When with bitter irony he seeks to trap the innocent Desdemona into admissions the nature of which she hardly understands, Desdemona tactlessly talks of Cassio. When Otello complains of the fever of his brow and bids her bind it with the handkerchief he gave her, she produces another and refers once more to Cassio's wrongs. With mounting hysteria he bids her swear upon her chastity and damn herself. Desdemona's tears, her anguished protestations of her love for him — all leave Otello unmoved and she is sent away.

After Otello's Monologue: "*Dio! mi potevi scagliar . . .*", Iago comes to invite him to listen unseen to the meeting he has arranged with Cassio which will furnish what further "proofs" Otello needs. In the snatches of the conversation reaching him in his hiding place there is ribald mention by Cassio of a certain Bianca which Otello takes to refer



to Desdemona. Then, seeing Cassio produce the handkerchief (Desdemona's) which he had found in his lodgings — it having been placed there, of course, by Iago — Otello doubts no longer.

A trumpet call develops into the great blaze of choral and orchestral music that introduces the splendid scene of the entry of the Doge's ambassadors led by Ludovico (Bass). They bear the Doge's decree recalling Otello to Venice and appointing Cassio in his place. There follows a long ensemble and as the scene proceeds Otello's self-control and sanity slip away. He insults Desdemona and strikes her down before the shocked assembly. Violently he orders all to leave before he crashes to the ground in a fit. Iago, echoing the populace's acclamation of Otello earlier in the scene, triumphantly salutes his victim — "*Ecco il Leone!*" — ("*Behold the Lion!*")

★ ★ ★

#### ACT IV

Desdemona's bed-chamber. Verdi's genius magically conveys the poignancy, the tension and the foreboding of this dénouement scene in the orchestral introduction and in the use of the woodwind and lower strings throughout. As she is undressed by Emilia, Desdemona's premonitions and sombre thoughts are

revealed in the simple "*Willow Song*" — ("*Salce! Salce!*") — which is the story of her mother's little maid, Barbara, whose lover "proved mad and did forsake her." There is panic in her outburst as she bids good night (and good-bye) to Emilia. Tranquil again, she recites her night prayer — the lovely "*Ave Maria*." To an ominous passage on the double-basses Otello enters through a secret door. He gazes a while on his sleeping wife, then kisses her three times. As Desdemona suddenly awakens, he asks her if she has prayed since he would not kill her soul as well. Again he taxes her with Cassio. As she protests in terror and begs for mercy he smothers her. Emilia enters as the voice of Desdemona murmurs that she dies innocent, but Otello brands her as a liar and the mistress of Cassio — Iago had told him so. Emilia cries out for help. Iago, entering (followed by Ludovico, Montano and Cassio) is confronted by Emilia. From her and from Cassio, Otello at last hears the truth about the fatal handkerchief. His short monologue "*Niun mi tema*" ended, Otello looks upon the white face of Desdemona and then stabs himself. He dies with the words "*Un bacio . . . un bacio ancora . . . un altro bacio . . .*" — ("*A kiss, another kiss . . . and yet a kiss*")—a poignant quotation from the felicity of the love-duet in the first Act of the opera.

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*GIACOMO PUCCINI, 1858-1924*  
LA BOHEME  
TOSCA  
MADAM BUTTERFLY  
MANON LESCAUT  
TURANDOT

*ERMANNO WOLF-FERRARI,*  
1876-1948  
SEGRETO DI SUSANNA

*UMBERTO GIORDANO, 1867-1948*  
ANDREA CHENIER

*JACQUES OFFENBACH, 1819-1880*  
TALES OF HOFFMAN

*CAMILLE SAINT-SAENS, 1835-1921*  
SAMSON AND DELILAH

*JULES MASSENET, 1842-1912*  
MANON

*CLAUDE DEBUSSY, 1862-1918*  
PELLÉAS AND MÉLISANDE

*ENGLEBERT HUMPERDINCK,*  
1854-1921

HANSEL AND GRETEL

*FRIEDRICH SMETANA, 1824-1884*  
THE BARTERED BRIDE

*MICHAEL WILLIAM BALFE,*  
1808-1870

THE BOHEMIAN GIRL

*LICINIO REFICE, 1884-1954*  
CECILIA



# DUBLIN GRAND OPERA SOCIETY

The Society invites those interested in Grand Opera to become Patron Members and enjoy the advantages of such Membership.

The Annual Subscription for Patron Members is :

Annual Patron Members — Four Guineas.

(Note :—Patron Members joining after opening of Spring Season pay £2-2-0 to cover subscription to end of year.)

Patron Members are entitled to two free seats in the Dress Circle or Boxes on a Patron Members' Night, or some alternative night at each season, priority postal booking for Society's productions and all other amenities and facilities of the Society.

If you wish to become a Patron Member please complete the form below and forward to

THOMAS A. DOYLE,

Chairman Patron Members' Committee,

Dublin Grand Opera Society,

11 Leinster Street, Dublin.

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## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE DUBLIN GRAND OPERA SOCIETY

I wish to make application to join the above Society as a  
Patron Member (Annual)

Enclosed is Cheque/P.O. for £4 : 4 : 0 Subscription.

(NOTE : Cheques and Orders to be made payable to the Society.)

Full Name.....  
(Block Letters. Please state whether Mr., Mrs. or Miss)

Address .....  
.....

Signature .....

Telephone No. (If Desired).....





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